



HANKINSON DUCKETT ASSOCIATES

**North Hemel Hempstead Landscape Assessment
REV E**

September 2024

CONTENTS

1	Executive Non-Technical Summary	page 1	7	Design Development	page 39
2	Methodology	page 3		<i>Figure 12: Landscape Structure Overlay</i>	<i>page 40</i>
3	Background Review	page 7	8	Recommended Potential Development Extent, Mitigation and Green Belt Boundary	page 41
	<i>Table 1: Background review</i>	<i>page 7</i>		<i>Figure 13: Potential Landscape Structure Strategy</i>	<i>page 42</i>
4	Baseline Assessment	page 12	9	Landscape and Visual Effects of Potential Development	page 43
	<i>Figure 1: Topography</i>	<i>page 13</i>		<i>Table 10: Gade Eastern Slopes</i>	<i>page 44</i>
	<i>Figure 2: Land Cover</i>	<i>page 14</i>		<i>Table 11: Lovetts End Ridges and Valleys</i>	<i>page 45</i>
	<i>Figure 3: Data Analysis</i>	<i>page 15</i>		<i>Table 12: Woodhall Valley</i>	<i>page 46</i>
	<i>Figure 4: Visual Context</i>	<i>page 17</i>		<i>Table 13: Holtsmere Plateau</i>	<i>page 47</i>
	<i>Figure 5: Key Viewpoints / Photograph Locations</i>	<i>page 18</i>		<i>Table 14: Gaddesden Lane Southern Slopes</i>	<i>page 48</i>
	<i>Figure 6: Hertfordshire LCA Character Areas</i>	<i>page 20</i>		<i>Table 15: Revel End Slopes</i>	<i>page 49</i>
	<i>Table 2: Gade Eastern Slopes</i>	<i>page 21</i>		<i>Table 16: Upper Vea Valley</i>	<i>page 50</i>
	<i>Table 3: Lovetts End Ridges and Valleys</i>	<i>page 22</i>		<i>Table 17: Potential Development as a Whole</i>	<i>page 51</i>
	<i>Table 4: Woodhall Valley</i>	<i>page 23</i>		<i>Table 18: Assessment of Potential Development Against the Purposes of the Green Belt</i>	<i>page 52</i>
	<i>Table 5: Holtsmere Plateau</i>	<i>page 24</i>	10	Conclusions	page 53
	<i>Table 6: Gaddesden Lane Southern Slopes</i>	<i>page 25</i>			
	<i>Table 7: Revel End Slopes</i>	<i>page 26</i>		Appendices	
	<i>Table 8: Upper Vea Valley</i>	<i>page 27</i>		A Photographs	
5	Landscape Sensitivity	page 28		B Landscape Sensitivity	
	<i>Figure 7: Assessment Parcels Landscape Sensitivity</i>	<i>page 30</i>		C Wireframe Photomontages	
6	Green Belt	page 31		D Stage 2 Green Belt Review scores	
	<i>Figure 8: Extent of Green Belt Covering Study Area</i>	<i>page 31</i>			
	<i>Figure 9: Summary of Green Belt assessments undertaken to date</i>	<i>page 33</i>			
	<i>Figure 10: Green Belt Review Areas Stage 1</i>	<i>page 34</i>			
	<i>Table 9: Key Differences in Methodology</i>	<i>page 35</i>			
	<i>Figure 11: Green Belt Review Areas Stage 2</i>	<i>page 36</i>			

1 EXECUTIVE NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report is intended to be part of the evidence base for two emerging Local Plans (relating to Dacorum and St Albans local authorities). It considers, from a landscape and visual perspective, the potential for development on land to the north-east of Hemel Hempstead as part of the Hemel Garden Communities programme, and assesses at a high level the likely landscape and visual effects of that development.
- 1.2 The report and its appendices include:
- A background review of relevant landscape studies to date which pertain to the area.
 - Consideration of the existing baseline landscape and visual conditions of the study area, with specific reference to the Chilterns National Landscape.
 - Identification of sub-areas known as ‘Assessment Parcels’, which are derived from variations in the existing character of the landscape.
 - Assessment of the sensitivity of each Assessment Parcel, taking into account criteria related to landscape and visual value and susceptibility to development.
 - Analysis and assessment to identify the potential extent of developable land and appropriate mitigation measures, including wireframe photomontages to test the likely visibility of various potential development extents and relevant mitigation.
 - Consideration of the Green Belt and potential alteration to its boundary.
 - High level assessment to identify likely degree of landscape and visual effects arising from the identified potential extent of development.
- 1.3 The methodology for the work is set out in Section 2.
- 1.4 Section 3 summaries the various existing landscape studies related to the study area. These include published landscape character assessments such as the Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) (see Figure 6). Although this LCA was published in 2004 before the current government guidance for landscape character assessment, the document remains a useful starting point to appreciate the local landscape context and understand the variations in landscape character which have informed identification of the sub-areas within the study area known as ‘Assessment Parcels’.
- 1.5 Several other studies have since been carried which assess the landscape sensitivity of the area. These have been reviewed and the findings considered to be broadly accurate. However in most instances, the majority of the study area has been assessed as a whole, which doesn’t reflect variations in sensitivity across the differing landscape characters north-east of Hemel Hempstead. This report has considered a finer grain assessment in order to capture the variations in the baseline conditions within the study area to enable development to be directed towards areas with lower landscape sensitivity and/or with the potential for successful mitigation.
- 1.6 The baseline conditions of each Assessment Parcel are examined through desk and field based study. Relevant designations and policy are mapped on Figure 3.
- 1.7 Landscape designations within the study area are limited to three blocks of ancient woodland, consisting of Thrift Wood and Varney’s Wood in the east and Hay Wood towards the north. However, the Chilterns National Landscape, formerly known as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), abuts the study area to the north. A small portion of the study area, at its north-west corner, overlaps into the AONB. The southern edge of the AONB then defines the majority of the northern extent of the Dacorum portion of the study area, with the northern study area boundary following the edge of the AONB eastwards for approximately 3.8km until it reaches the junction of Gaddesden Lane with Green Lane. The northern edge of the study area then continues further east away from the AONB, for approximately 2.2km along Gaddesden Lane until it reaches the M1. A network of public rights of way allows public access across the area between the northern edge of Hemel Hempstead and the southern edge of the AONB. The whole study area lies within the

Green Belt.

1.8 In order to assess the study area at a finer, yet manageable scale (appropriate to this relatively high level study), seven 'Assessment Parcels' were identified based on variations in general landscape character. These are located on Figures 1-6 and are labelled as follows:

- A: Gade Eastern Slopes
- B: Lovetts End Ridges and Valleys
- C: Woodhall Valley
- D: Holtsmere Plateau
- E: Gaddesden Lane Southern Slopes
- F: Revel End Slopes
- G: Upper Vea Valley

1.9 The baseline conditions for each Assessment Parcel are set out in tabulated form within Section 4, taking into account the following:

- Landscape baseline and key features
- Visual baseline and key viewpoints
- Perceptual and experiential qualities
- Relationship with AONB and settlement edges

1.10 Photographs 1-43 provide a representation of the current landscape and visual baseline from key viewpoints are included in Appendix A. The viewpoints are located on Figure 5.

1.11 The landscape and visual sensitivity to development is then estimated for each of the Assessment Parcels, taking into account landscape and visual value and susceptibility. This is informed by assessing the baseline conditions against a range of criteria recommended by best practice guidance. The criteria and assessment findings are set out in tabulated format in Appendix B and summarised in Section 5. The resulting sensitivity judgements for each Assessment Parcel are as follows, and mapped on Figure 7:

- A: Gade Eastern Slopes: High
- B: Lovetts End Ridges and Valleys: Medium

- C: Woodhall Valley: Medium
- D: Holtsmere Plateau: High-Medium
- E: Gaddesden Lane Southern Slopes: High-Medium
- F: Revel End Slopes: Medium
- G: Upper Vea Valley: Medium

1.12 Section 6 considers the Green Belt context for the study area, noting relevant national policy and Green Belt Assessments covering the area.

1.13 Wireframe photomontages 1-8 were then prepared to test the likely visibility of different extents of development and effectiveness of potential mitigation measures. These are included and explained in Appendix C.

1.14 Consideration of the previous studies, baseline conditions, sensitivity assessment and wireframe testing culminates in a recommended scenario of development extent, potential landscape structure and refined Green Belt boundary. This is mapped on Figure 13 and discussed within Section 8.

1.15 Potential landscape and visual effects on each Assessment Parcel from the recommended extent of development are assessed at a high level in Section 9. The tabulated assessment considers effects assuming no mitigation and then takes into account appropriate potential mitigation, set out under the following headings:

- Potential Landscape Effects
- Potential Effects of Visibility
- Potential Effects on the AONB
- Potential to Avoid or Reduce Adverse Effects

1.16 Section 9 also analyses the consistency of the proposals with Green Belt policy and considers how the high level proposals respond to the aims and purposes of the Green Belt.

1.17 The report is concluded at Section 10.

2 METHODOLOGY

Initiation and Background

- 2.1 Background documents and relevant GIS data and OS mapping were obtained as appropriate. The extent of the study area was agreed with Dacorum and St Albans City and District Councils and includes sites referenced in the Dacorum 2020 Site Selection Topic Paper, including Rural 074, Rural 149L, Rural 069, Rural 065 and the area of land between the AONB and north-east of site Rural 074. All relevant data including designations, policy and physical features was collated and mapped at 1:25,000 scale to inform subsequent analysis.

Desk Analysis

- 2.2 Desk based structural analysis utilised collated information to consider the physical and human influences that have shaped the landscape of the study area. Physical influences (natural factors) include geology, soils, landform, drainage, and land cover, which, in turn, have a strong influence on patterns of human occupation and activity. Development that has changed the landscape character, such as housing, equestrian uses, and energy generation, would be identified. The study also reviews current cultural/social factors such as patterns of settlement and land use, enclosure, gaps between areas of settlement, and considered the current changes in the landscape and the pressures for change acting on the landscape of the study area.
- 2.3 The structural analysis distils out the main elements which contribute to the character, structure and setting of the north of Hemel Hempstead and the AONB. This technique, in conjunction with local character assessment, is the basis for identifying appropriate directions for growth in landscape terms. If development is consistent with the setting and structure of the local settlement pattern and its landscape context, then the essential character of those settlements and the surrounding area will be retained. If future development is not consistent with that structure, then the relationship between the town or village and its setting will be damaged, and the landscape character of the Borough and/or AONB could be adversely affected.

- 2.4 Given the large size of the study area, sub-divisions known as 'Assessment Parcels' are defined for assessment purposes, based on variations in landscape character.

Initial Field Assessment

- 2.5 Field survey is used to verify the desk study and capture aesthetic, perceptual and experiential qualities. The field survey records and assesses the condition of landscape elements, views and landscape characteristics across the study area, and considers the pattern, scale, unity and tranquillity of the landscape, settlement pattern, and landmarks. Visits to the local area confirmed the visual envelope and carry out a detailed visual assessment from the identified visual receptors. Relationship to both the settlement edge and the AONB were reviewed during the field work. Photographs would be used to record views and general landscape character.

Appraisal of Existing Studies

- 2.6 Existing studies pertaining to the study area have been appraised against the desk analysis and initial field analysis. Agreement or otherwise with previous studies are summarised in tabulated format and help inform subsequent assessment.

Sensitivity Assessment - Best Practice Guidance

- 2.7 In June 2019 Natural England published '*An Approach to Landscape Sensitivity Assessment - to Inform Spatial Planning and Land Management*' which took into account evolution of best practice and changes to Landscape Institute guidance. The current 2019 guidance in effect replaced the previous 'Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity' guidance.
- 2.8 The 2019 Natural England guidance sets out an approach which determines landscape sensitivity as a combination of landscape and visual susceptibility, and value. Landscapes assessed to have lesser landscape sensitivity are those most suitable for development, where development would have the least undesirable effects on the landscape.

- 2.9 The 2019 Natural England guidance provides a range of criteria against which landscapes should be assessed to determine their sensitivity to different types of development. One of these criteria is 'value'.
- 2.10 In 2021, the Landscape Institute published '*Technical Guidance Note 02/21: Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designation*', which sets out in greater detail how to determine value than the previous Natural England guidance. The landscape Institute defines landscape value as "*the relative value or importance attached to different landscapes by society on account of their landscape qualities*" and suggests that value assessments should be carried out by landscape professionals, taking into account the range of criteria.
- 2.11 The methodology for assessing the landscape sensitivity of the seven assessment parcels therefore follows the principles set out in the 2019 Natural England guidance, but incorporates a detailed assessment of value as prescribed by the 2021 Landscape Institute guidance. The criteria and susceptibility indicators relevant to this study are set out at within Appendix B.

Sensitivity Assessment - Classification

- 2.12 Best practice methodology has moved away from quantitative ranking of landscape components, to a more descriptive approach. However, the Landscape Institutes Technical Guidance Note 02/21 explains that "*once evidence for each factor has been collated and assessed, it is important to step back and judge the overall 'weight of evidence' in coming to an overall judgement...*". In line with this, and to aid comparison between the assessment parcels considered, parcels are given a guide classification based on a five point scale for each individual assessment criteria to reflect the corresponding notes and build up an overall judgement of the level of sensitivity of each parcel.
- 2.13 The five classifications for the individual criteria are as follows:
- **High** - the assessment parcel meets the indicators to a high degree across the vast majority of its extent and represents the best examples

of the factor within the study area.

- **High-Medium** - the indicators are notable within the assessment parcel and there are above average examples across the majority of the parcel.
- **Medium** - the indicator is identifiable within the assessment parcel to a moderate degree, but is unremarkable compared to other examples within the study area.
- **Low-Medium** - Limited examples where the indicator can be identified within the assessment parcel.
- **Low** - The indicator has not been identified, or is difficult to perceive, within the assessment parcel.

Overall Sensitivity Judgements

- 2.14 Classifications are likely to vary between factors, but combined will build up a picture of the 'weight of evidence' and help define an overall sensitivity judgement for each assessment parcel as follows:

High sensitivity

- 2.15 Areas with several criteria judged to be 'High' will highlight an outstanding landscape with particularly high sensitivity. These areas have landscape/visual characteristics which are very susceptible to change and/or their value is high. Areas judged to have High sensitivity are unable to accommodate development without significant character change or adverse effects. In the event that development is proposed within areas of High sensitivity, significant evidence and mitigation would be required in order to make the proposals acceptable. Proposals would need to be of exceptionally high quality and appropriate to the location.

High-Medium sensitivity

- 2.16 Assessment parcels with consistently above average classification of 'High-Medium' for the majority of criteria will demonstrate an 'all-round' notable sensitivity, meaning the assessment parcel has landscape/visual characteristics which are very susceptible to change and its values are moderate to high. The area is unlikely to accommodate

development without significant character change or adverse effects. Any development should be on a small scale, in appropriate locations, where it can be demonstrated that proposals would not have an adverse effect on the landscape. Thresholds for significant change are very low. If development is proposed within areas of High-Medium sensitivity, this should consider the highest levels of sensitivity within the assessment parcel and should be landscape-led, with robust and effective mitigation. Substantial evidence would be required in order for effects to be assessed robustly.

Medium sensitivity

- 2.17 Assessment parcels which are generally average overall may still exhibit landscape/visual characteristics which are susceptible to change and have elements which are valued. The area may be able to accommodate development in identified situations without significant character change or adverse effects, where such locations are defined, however thresholds for significant change are likely to be moderate to low. If development is proposed within areas of Medium sensitivity, this should consider the highest levels of sensitivity within the assessment parcel and should be designed sensitively. Adverse effects on character change and views should be avoided wherever possible and opportunities for enhancement should be investigated.

Low-Medium sensitivity

- 2.18 Areas below average across the majority of criteria are landscapes with relatively limited landscape/visual characteristics which are susceptible to change and values which are low to medium. The site may have potential to accommodate development in a number of situations without significant character change or adverse effects. Thresholds for significant change are intermediate. Development within areas with Medium-Low sensitivity should be sensitive to its context and appropriate in scale and land use. Adverse effects on character change and views should be avoided and opportunities for enhancement should be investigated.

Low sensitivity

- 2.19 The assessment parcel has landscape/visual characteristics which are degraded or resilient and not susceptible to change and has no or limited value. The area could accommodate development without adverse landscape/visual effects. Thresholds for significant changes are high or very high. Development within areas with Low sensitivity should seek to avoid adverse effects and create opportunities for enhancement where possible.

Wireframe Testing

- 2.20 Wireframe photomontages are prepared to demonstrate the likely effect of various extents of development and mitigation at Year 0 and Year 15 from appropriate viewpoints. The wireframes test three indicative development extents as explained in Appendix C, and are utilised to inform the potential development extent and assessment judgements as appropriate prior to final reporting. Visualisations are prepared in keeping with Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19 '*Visual Representation of Development Proposals*' with respect to the requirements for wireframes. Wireframe photomontages are presented side by side on A3 sheets to allow for existing, Year 0 and Year 15 comparison.

3D Model

- 2.21 Existing landform is modelled from Ordnance Survey Terrain 5 DTM data. 2 storey development is modelled as 9m high above existing ground levels, and is indicated on the wireframes as orange coloured blocks indicate. Potential structural planting is likely to include a mixture of mainly 'whips' (1m high at the time of planting) and 'feathers' (2m high at the time of planting), along with some 'standards' (3m high at the time of planting) and 'extra heavy standards' (4m high at the time of planting). Planting blocks in the 3D model are modelled as 'feathers' and indicated in green on the wireframes. It is assumed no gain in height for the first year, then growth of 0.35m each subsequent year. Therefore structure planting is indicated as 6.9m after 15 years. Additional groups of Standard trees (7.9m high after 15 years) and Extra Heavy Standards

(8.9m high after 15 years) have been included within areas of open space/SANG to indicate their possible effect. In general, the height of trees used for the purpose of the wireframe testing are conservative and easily achievable.

Development Extent, Mitigation and Green Belt Boundary

- 2.22 Informed by the sensitivity assessment and subsequently refined by wireframe testing, options for the potential development extent from a landscape and visual perspective is identified and mapped at 1:25,000 scale. Suitable mitigation is considered and mapped for the potential development extent in combination with the emerging masterplan.

Assessment of Effects

- 2.23 The landscape and visual effects of recommended development extents and mitigation is considered, including potential effects on the AONB and its setting, and potential to avoid or reduce adverse effects. This is a high level assessment only, but has regard for the principles set out in The Landscape Institutes third edition of “Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment”, published in 2013 (GLVIA3).

3 BACKGROUND REVIEW

- 3.1 The background review included an appraisal of relevant policy, published landscape character assessment, previous sensitivity studies, and relevant data which informed the study context and constraints.
- 3.2 Table 1 below summarises the review of related documents.

AGREEMENT/KEY POINTS	POINTS FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION
Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment 2004:	
Agree with broad arrangement of character areas 123 (High Gade Valley), 124 (Gaddesden Row) and 95 (Revel End Plateau) which cover the Dacorum part of the study area.	Exact boundary between areas 124 and 95 needs further consideration at local scale where they cross the site to help define sub-areas (Assessment Parcels) based on variations in local landscape character.
<p>Agree with majority of descriptions for each of the character areas, including tree cover and views.</p> <p>Area 123: views along the valley, slopes widely visible, framed by topography and occasional woodland, settlement concentrated in the valley floor.</p> <p>Area 124: discrete woodland creating varied skyline. Area has open feel but is only locally visible due to vegetation and field boundaries which filter views. Urban edge of Hemel Hempstead forms the southeast of the area.</p> <p>Area 95: discrete woodlands, distinctive clusters of farm buildings, views filtered by hedgerow trees and high verges, with area only locally visible from surrounding areas. Influence from Hemel Hempstead to the south.</p>	Some local variations in elements which combine to define landscape character (eg tree cover, topographical features, extent of views etc) need confirmation on the ground to inform Assessment Parcels.

AGREEMENT/KEY POINTS	POINTS FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION
<p>Summary Condition and Strength of Character Matrices for each character area appear broadly correct in relation to each other.</p> <p>Area 123: Good x Moderate = Conserve and strengthen</p> <p>Areas 124: Good x Strong = Safeguard and manage</p> <p>Area: 95: Moderate x Moderate = Improve and Conserve</p>	<p>These summaries will be reviewed as part of the subsequent assessment at a local level outside the AONB. In particular;</p> <p>Is area 124 'good x strong' weighted by the area within the AONB to the north?</p> <p>Should the part of 124 which is within the study area be judged more similar to area 95?</p>

AGREEMENT/KEY POINTS	POINTS FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION
<p>Dacorum Stage 2 Green Belt Review and Landscape Appraisal 2016: (Green Belt is covered in detail in section 6)</p>	
<p>The review summarises the relationship of parcels with the AONB, including comparison of HH-A1 which is within the study area, to areas HH-A5 and HH-A14 which are outside the study area to the east: <i>“The relatively intact, intricate landscape pattern in parcel HH-A5 and HH-A14 allied to the undulating landform results in these parcels having the strongest relationship in terms of character to the AONB and associated special qualities, and are therefore most sensitive/constrained. Aspects of the High Gade Valley within HH-A1 also have some relationship with the AONB, although this area is also much defined by the urban fringe influences associated with the A41 Leighton Buzzard Road (note Roman villa site in valley floor here, which relates to ancient settlement patterns intrinsic to the character of the AONB). Parcel HH-A1 is defined largely by eroded arable fields and ‘edge’ influences such as the playing fields near Grovehill.”</i></p>	<p>The review judges area HH-A1 as strongly contributing to the Green Belt and recommends a small extension to meet the AONB boundary. However, HH-A1 covers a large area between the existing settlement edge and the AONB.</p>

AGREEMENT/KEY POINTS	POINTS FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION
<p>The review states the following in relation to landscape sensitivity: <i>“HH-A1 The overall sensitivity of this landscape is judged high by virtue of its elevation, openness and associated prominence, plus the visual and physical buffer it forms between Hemel Hempstead and the AONB, its representation of landscape characteristics in common with the AONB special qualities and therefore its role as part of the AONB’s setting.</i> <i>HH-A2 The overall sensitivity of this landscape is judged medium in view of the eroded character created by urban fringe influenced land uses and land management, which mean that the parcel has relatively little relationship in terms of character with the wider countryside of the High Gade Valley to the north.”</i></p>	<p>Whilst this highlights key considerations to take into account, the comments are over generalised, relating to HH-A1 as a whole, and for the purposes of steering development to least sensitive areas, should be supplanted by more detailed sensitivity assessment to current value and sensitivity guidance which takes into account variation across the study area. Conversely, HH-A2 is a very small portion of the wider continuation of rural valley side.</p>

AGREEMENT/KEY POINTS	POINTS FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION
Hemel Garden Communities Charter 2018:	
<p><i>“The natural variation in topography and landscape will form the character areas of the new Garden Communities, and the existing landscape of valleys and fields will shape the pattern of new development Buildings will sensitively respond to context creating new key land marks and vistas whilst protecting sensitive views.”</i></p>	n/a
<p><i>“The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a significant natural asset to the local area, and the development will protect this through ensuring development and the activity this will bring does not encroach on its southern edge which forms the northern extent of the site. Taking landform, views and landscape into account, the new development will ensure the setting of the AONB is maintained. Reflecting the context of this development within wider cumulative impacts on the Chilterns AONB, additional landscaping will be required to screen sensitive views from the AONB. A permanent green buffer is also required to Redbourn village.”</i></p>	n/a

AGREEMENT/KEY POINTS	POINTS FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION
Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019-2024:	
<p>The Management Plan sets out the special qualities of the Chilterns AONB (now National Landscape) which are considered nationally important and require protection. These qualities are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Panoramic views from and across the escarpment interwoven with intimate dipslope valleys and rolling fields. ■ Significant ancient hedgerows, hedgerow and field trees, orchards and parkland weaving across farmland... ■ Relative tranquillity and peace on the doorstep of ten million people, one of the most accessible protected landscapes in Europe; relatively dark skies, of great value to human and wildlife health; unspoilt countryside, secret corners and a surprising sense of remoteness. ■ Nationally important concentrations of chalk grassland... Species for which the AONB is particularly important include Chiltern gentian, wild candytuft, pasqueflower, silver-spotted skipper and glow-worm. ■ One of the most wooded landscapes in England... ■ Nine precious chalk streams... ■ A dramatic chalk escarpment... <p><i>continues...</i></p>	<p>The majority of these qualities are not characteristic of the AONB within the vicinity of the study area.</p> <p>However, the area does exhibit considerable woodland cover and frequent hedgerows which contribute to the special qualities of the AONB.</p> <p>The part of the Chilterns within the vicinity of the study area is more disturbed by human influences than more pristine areas within the main body of the designated landscape. However, tree cover including woodland does provide some sense of tranquillity away from obvious human influence.</p> <p>There is a relatively good concentration of public rights of way within the area, and the Chiltern Way and Hertfordshire Way pass through the AONB near the study area, but these long distance paths have limited association / intervisibility with the study area.</p>

AGREEMENT/KEY POINTS	POINTS FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ An extensive and diverse archaeological landscape... ■ Over 2000ha of common land... ■ A dense network of 2000km of rights of way; two National Trails, the Ridgeway and Thames Path; notable regional routes such as the Chiltern Way and the Chilterns Cycleway. ■ Numerous ancient routeways and sunken lanes, including the Icknield Way. ■ An industrial heritage... ■ Distinctive buildings made from local brick, flint and clay tiles; many attractive villages, popular places to live in and visit; many notable individual buildings and follies. 	
Dacorum Borough Landscape Sensitivity Study April 2020:	
n/a	The assessment identifies parcel 74 as within character area 95 and 124. However, the western end is also within area 123 (High Gade Valley). Some descriptions need checking e.g. reference to 'dramatic topography'.
The evaluation of landscape value for parcel 74 has some pertinent points, including identification of the relevant points from the Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment, no internal (landscape) designations, setting to the AONB, and recreational value of the public rights of way network.	The value assessment needs to be more detailed, following criteria set out in the latest Landscape Institute guidance for assessing landscape value, which can then be fed into the overall sensitivity assessment.

AGREEMENT/KEY POINTS	POINTS FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION
The susceptibility assessment includes relatively extensive comment on landform, development character and edges, perception, scale and pattern, and views, which appear broadly correct, but will need verification in some cases.	n/a
n/a	<p>The assessment helpfully makes reference to different parts of the site, and notes that south-west of the parcel has lower sensitivity, but the entire parcel 74 is scored as a whole for susceptibility, which therefore doesn't take into account variations at a local level.</p> <p>Findings of the sensitivity assessment can be utilised but will need to be considered in relation to smaller scale Assessment Parcels based on variations in landscape character across the study area.</p>
Dacorum Borough Site Assessment Study 2020:	
<p>This is a relatively 'high level' study with Landscape and Visual Impact one of several elements considered, but the study makes a number of key points:</p> <p>An extensive area which exhibits differing characteristics.</p> <p>Development should stay east of the western ridgeline from both a heritage and landscape perspective.</p> <p>Remainder of the site is relatively unconstrained, but care must be taken to minimise impact on the AONB, ancient woodland, heritage assets and the potential for coalescence.</p>	n/a

AGREEMENT/KEY POINTS	POINTS FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION
Gade Valley Landscape Capacity Study 2021:	
The study recognises the scale, open nature and valley side location and identifies the range of locations from where the Gade Valley site is visible. The vast majority of the baseline descriptions and assessment appear accurate and recommended mitigation largely appropriate for the extent of potential development identified by the study.	The study states that the Gade Valley site has a limited visual envelope. This may underplay the baseline visibility of the valley side given the fact there are a range of views including extensive internal views, views from the adjacent AONB, and occasional distant views from elevated viewpoints.
n/a	The study concludes that development on the Gade Valley as recommended would have a negligible impact at the local scale. The closeness of the AONB to the study area and potential direct views of development and mitigation from the designated landscape of national importance suggest the greatest effects would be at the local scale warranting careful protection of the setting to the AONB.
Concept Framework Plan Rev C January 2023:	
n/a	The north-west built development area may come too close to the AONB. It may be preferable to reduce the width of open space along the existing settlement edge and increase the width of open space along the northern edge nearest the AONB.

AGREEMENT/KEY POINTS	POINTS FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION
St Albans Stage 2 Green Belt Review June 2023: (Green Belt is covered in detail in section 6)	
	The St Albans Stage 2 Green Belt Review (2023) considered sites covering approximately two thirds of the St Albans portion of the study area. Sub-area SA-172 of the Green Belt review covers the eastern half of Assessment Parcel E and the northern portion of Assessment Parcel F. Sub-area SA-170 covers the southern portion of Assessment Parcel F. The areas within Assessment Parcel G is not included in the review, however the band of land between Hemel Hempstead Road and the Nickey Line is included as sub-area SA-171. All three sub-areas were assessed in the Green Belt review as performing strongly against the purposes set out in the NPPF, in particular against purposes 1 to 4.

4 BASELINE ASSESSMENT

Introduction

- 4.1 The study area is located between the northern edge of Hemel Hempstead and the southern edge of the Chilterns AONB. The western extent of the study area is defined by the Gade Valley Floor, while to the east the study area reaches the M1 motorway.

Landscape Structure

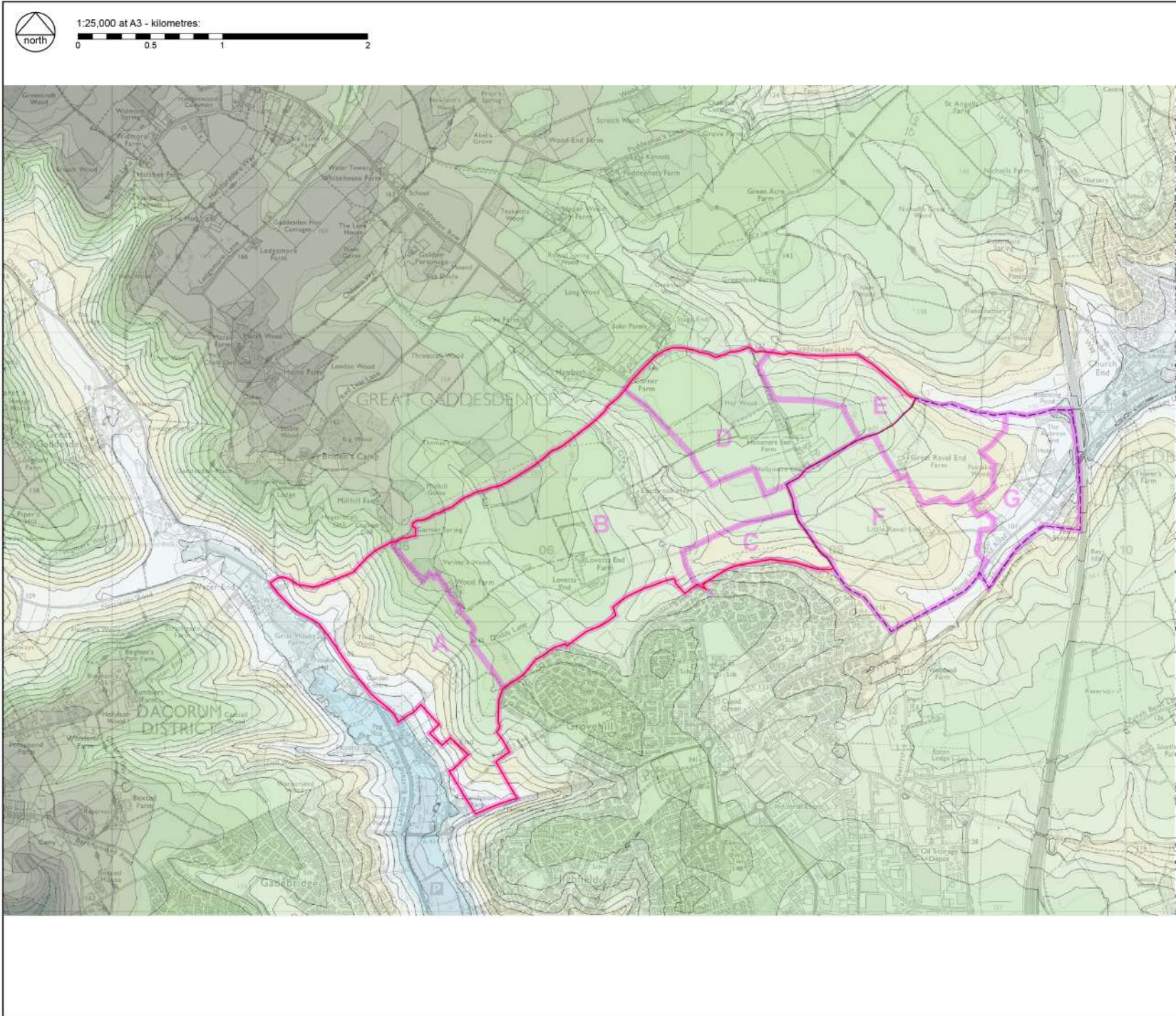
- 4.2 Landform climbs from the west on the Gade Valley side, and from the east from the Upper Veal Valley (see Figure 1). The central portion has subtler topography with a plateau area and a series of local minor valleys and ridges. The area consists predominantly of intensively managed arable farmland (see Figure 2). There are scattered blocks of woodland and a relatively intact network of hedgerows, however the area has less tree cover than the AONB to the north and a significant number of field boundaries have been lost due to amalgamation of fields since the 1900s. Settlement is limited to farmsteads and occasional small groups of dwellings.

Chilterns National Landscape (formerly AONB)

- 4.3 During the course of this study, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) were renamed as National Landscapes. However, the terminology has not been updated within legislation or national policy and for the purposes of this study the designation is referred to as the Chilterns AONB.
- 4.4 The Chilterns AONB abuts the study area to the north (see Figure 3). A small portion of the study area, at its north-west corner, overlaps into the AONB. The 2019-2024 Chilterns AONB Management plan identifies qualities which make the AONB special. These special qualities can be summarised as follows (with further detail in Table 1):
- Panoramic views from and across the escarpment.
 - Significant ancient hedgerows, hedgerow and field trees, orchards and parkland.
 - Tranquil, unspoilt, countryside.

- Nationally important areas of species-rich chalk grassland including threatened species, such as Chiltern gentian, wild candytuft, pasqueflower, silver-spotted skipper and glow-worm.
- One of the most wooded landscapes in England.
- Nine precious chalk streams.
- A dramatic chalk escarpment.
- A diverse archaeological landscape.
- Extensive common lands.
- A dense network of public rights of way.
- Numerous ancient routeways and sunken lanes.
- An industrial heritage.
- Distinctive buildings.

- 4.5 The southern edge of the AONB which abuts the study area exhibits few of these special qualities. The area is distant from the escarpment and chalk streams, is spoilt by pylons, and is without significant common land or ancient woodland. However, the wooded character along the southern edge of the AONB helps separate the study area from more unspoilt areas within the main body of the AONB, and the parkland associated with Gaddesden Place to the north.
- 4.6 During consultation, Natural England advocated that the special qualities of the AONB should be considered within any assessment of the potential effects of the allocation on the setting to the Chilterns.



1:25,000 at A3 - kilometres:



KEY

- General study area - Dacorum
- General study area - St Albans
- Assessment parcels

CLIENT:
 Dacorum Borough Council and
 St Albans City and District Council
 PROJECT:
 North Hemel Hempstead
 TITLE:
 Topography
 SCALE AT A3:
 1:25,000
 DATE:
 May 2024
 1079.2 / 11 C

Based on Ordnance Survey mapping with permission of Her Majesty's Stationery Office
 License no. AR18/3/2

© hankinson duckett associates
 The Stables, Howbery Park, Benson Lane, Watlington, OX10 8BA
 t 01491 838175 e consult@hda-environment.co.uk w www.hda-environment.co.uk

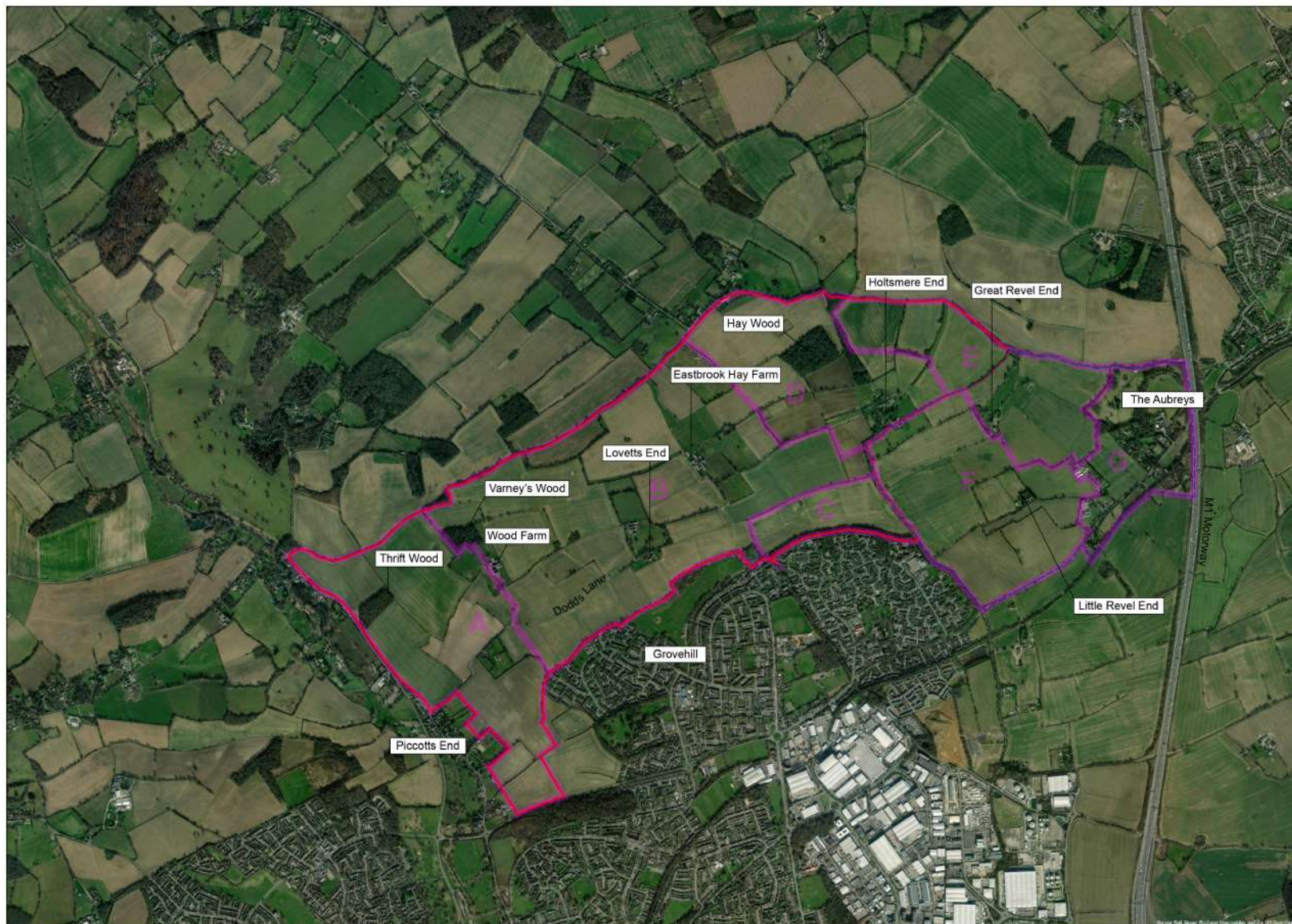
Landscape Architecture
 Masterplanning
 Ecology






Figure 1 Topography



1:25,000 at A3 - kilometres:



KEY

-  General study area - Dacorum
-  General study area - St Albans
-  Assessment parcels

CLIENT:
Dacorum Borough Council and
St Albans City and District Council

PROJECT:
North Hemel Hempstead

TITLE:
Land Cover

SCALE AT A3:
1:25,000

DATE:
May 2024

1079.2 / 12 C

Based on Ordnance Survey mapping with permission of Her Majesty's Stationery Office

License no. AR18332
© hankinson duckett associates
The Stables, Howbery Park, Benson Lane, Wallingford, OX10 8BA
t 01491 838175 e consult@hda-environment.co.uk w www.hda-environment.co.uk

Landscape Architecture
Masterplanning
Ecology



Figure 2 Land Cover

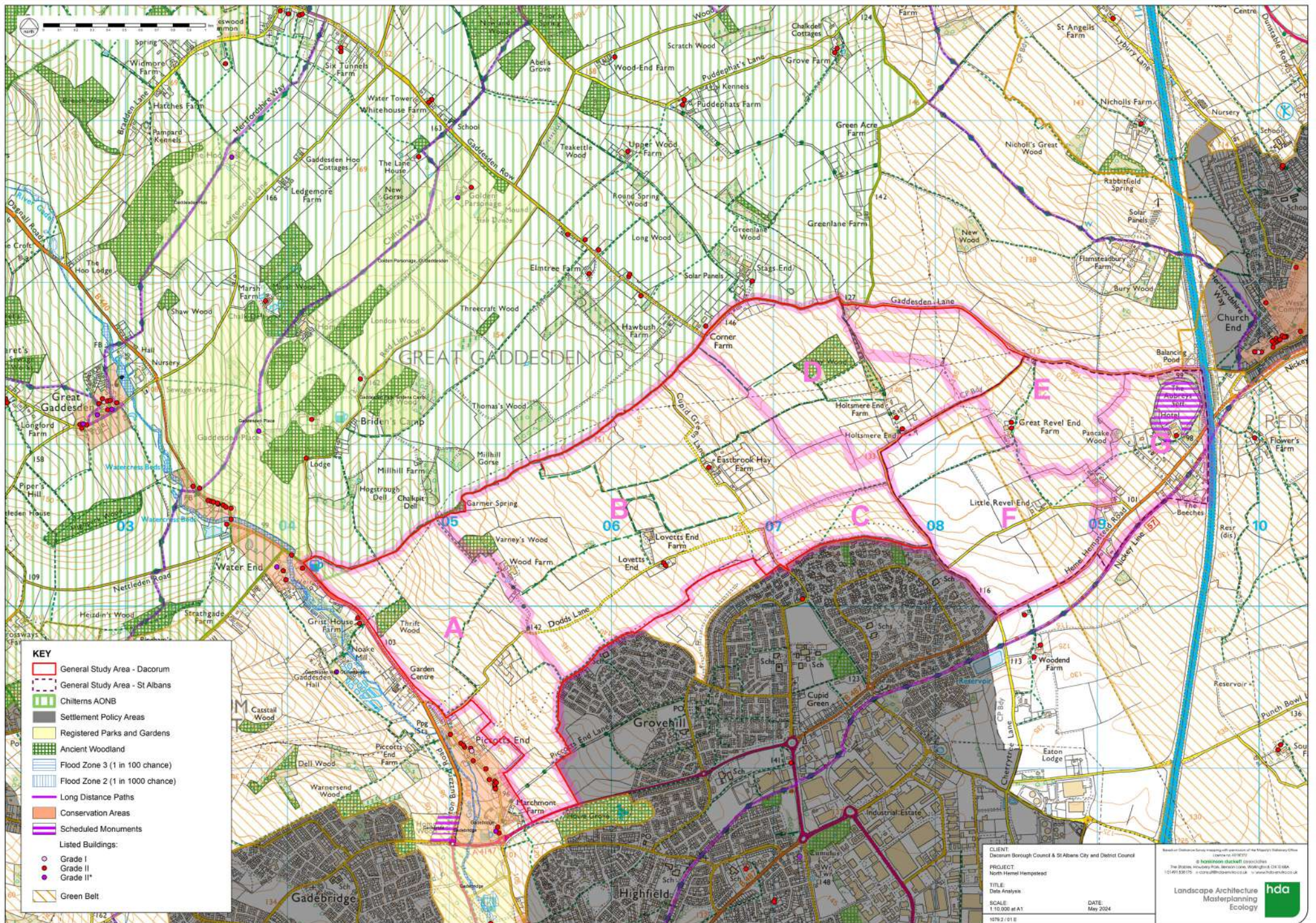
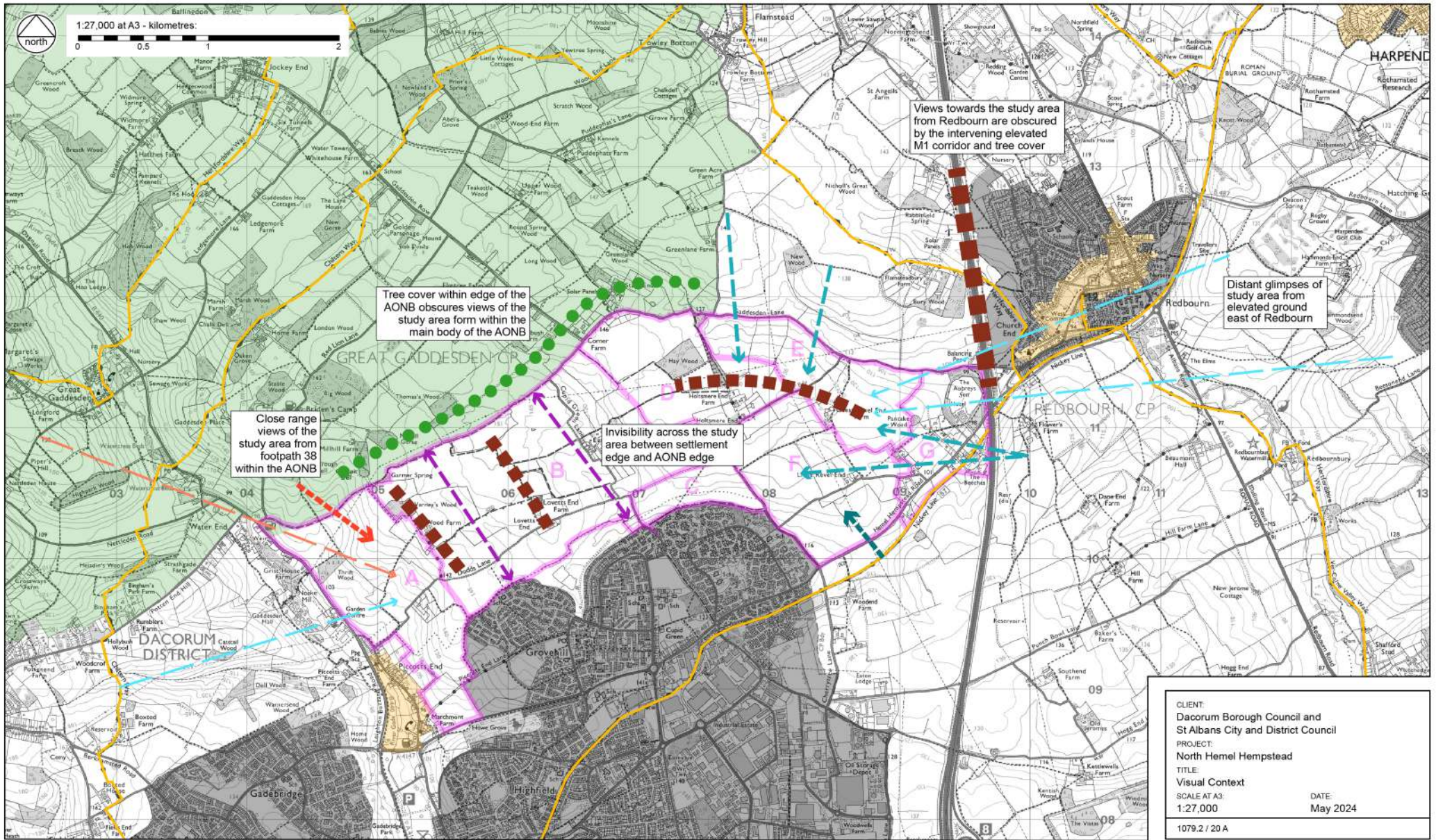


Figure 3 Data Analysis

Visual Context and Key Viewpoints

- 4.7 Figure 4 illustrates the general visual context of the study area. This analysis has informed the selection of key viewpoints which are representative of the range of views experienced towards and within the general study area. The location of key viewpoints are shown on Figure 5, and annotated photographs from each key viewpoint are included in Appendix A.
- 4.8 Views to the north and south tend to be contained by tree cover along the edge of the AONB and landform to the north, and existing settlement to the south. However there are some close range views of the study area from the AONB to the north-west (viewpoint 2) and intervisibility between the AONB and the settlement edge of Hemel Hempstead seen across the study area (including viewpoints 3, 4, 19, 20, 21 and 43). Views of the study area from the east and west are generally experienced at a greater distance and from elevated locations (including viewpoints 1, 6, 5, 8, 38, 39, 41 and 42).
- 4.9 Photographs from viewpoints 10, 12 and 13 show how vegetation obscured the study area from the majority of the AONB. Photographs from viewpoints 36, 37 and 40 demonstrate the lack of intervisibility between Hemel Hempstead and Redbourn. From a number of locations along the northern edge of Hemel Hempstead, the study area can be seen at close range, with tree cover marking the southern edge of the AONB seen in the distance, particularly during winter. Housing along the settlement edge obscures views of the study area from the main body of Hemel Hempstead, although there are occasional views out between gaps in housing such as from viewpoint 43.
- 4.10 Public rights of way and rural lanes allow views of the study area internally (viewpoints 15, 19, 20, 21, 22, 27, 18, 30, 32 and 35) and there are relatively close range glimpses of nearby fields within the study area from roads including Mill Close (viewpoint 14), Leighton Buzzard Road (B440) in winter (viewpoint 23) to the west and Hemel Hempstead Road (B487) (viewpoints 34 and 35) to the east.



CLIENT:
Dacorum Borough Council and
St Albans City and District Council

PROJECT:
North Hemel Hempstead

TITLE:
Visual Context

SCALE AT A3:
1:27,000

DATE:
May 2024

1079.2 / 20 A

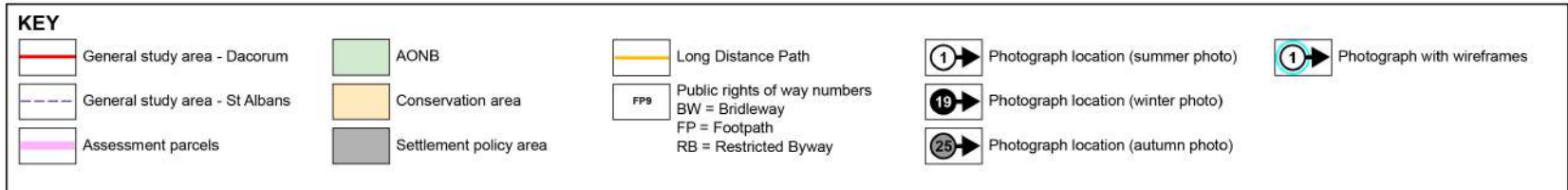
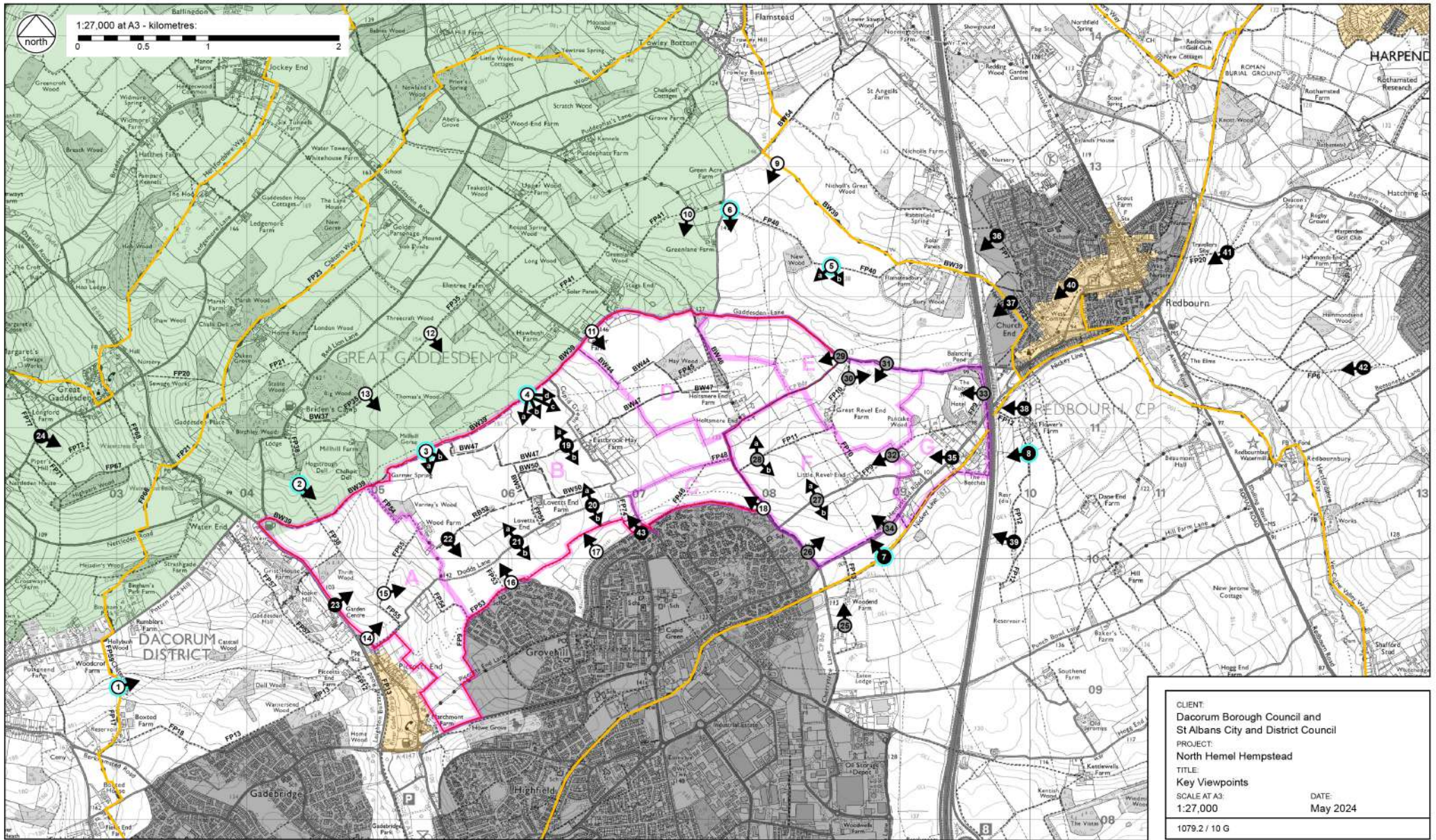
KEY					
	AONB		Long Distance Path		Containing features: primarily tree cover
	Conservation area		Assessment parcels		Close range view from AONB
	Settlement policy area		Containing features: primarily landform		Distant view from AONB
			Close range view		Intervisibility between settlement edge and AONB edge
			Intermediate view		
			Distant view		

Based on Ordnance Survey mapping with permission of Her Majesty's Stationary Office
Licence no. AP18/972

The Stables, Howbery Park, Benson Lane, Wallingford, OX10 8BA
t 01491 838175 e consulf@hda-erivio.co.uk w www.hda-erivio.co.uk

Landscape Architecture
Masterplanning
Ecology

Figure 4 Visual Context



Based on Ordnance Survey mapping with permission of Her Majesty's Stationary Office
Licence no. A1818/22

hankinson duckett associates
The Stables, Howbery Park, Benson Lane, Wallingford, OX10 8BA
t 01491 838175 e consult@hda-erlvto.co.uk w www.hda-erlvto.co.uk

**Landscape Architecture
Masterplanning
Ecology**

hda

Figure 5 Key Viewpoints / Photograph Locations

Landscape Character Areas and Assessment Parcels

- 4.11 The 2004 Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) for Hertfordshire maps and describes Character Areas covering the study areas. These Character Areas are shown on Figure 6. The western end of the study area includes the west facing slopes of the High Gade Valley Character Area (area 123), the Character Areas of Gaddesden Row (area 124) and Revel End Plateau (area 95) occupy the central undulating portion of the study area, while the eastern end of the study area descends on the south-east facing slopes of the Upper Vea Valley (area 96).
- 4.12 A finer grain consideration of the varying characteristics at a local scale has been undertaken, to refine and sub-divide the LCA Character Areas. Seven sub-divisions have been identified to form 'Assessment Parcels'. The Assessment Parcels are defined by variations in landscape characteristics such as topography, orientation, land cover, enclosure, settlement and other human influences, which are identified in the following tabulated baseline assessment, and combined will allow an appreciation of the varying sensitivity across the study area.
- 4.13 The Assessment Parcel boundaries have been included on Figures 1-6 to illustrate how they relate to these variations. Figure 6 shows how the Assessment Parcels relate to the Character Areas of the Herefordshire LCA, as set out below:
- **A: Gade Eastern Slopes:** formed from part of the west facing slopes of Hertfordshire LCA Character Area 123 'High Gade Valley', with some minor amendments to the eastern boundary along the top of the slope to include the full extent of the west facing valley side.
 - **B: Lovetts End Ridges and Valleys:** formed from southern parts of Hertfordshire LCA Character Areas 95 'Revel End Plateau' and Character Area 124 'High Gade Valley' logically combined at a local level by a unifying pattern of topography and land cover.
 - **C: Woodhall Valley:** formed from part of the south-western corner of Hertfordshire LCA Character Area 95 'Revel End Plateau', which at a local level consists of an east-west valley feature along the settlement

edge, at the end of the valley complex which continues east towards the Vea Valley.

- **D: Holtsmere Plateau:** part of the Hertfordshire LCA Character Area 95 'Revel End Plateau', and is formed from a plateau of relatively flat landscape above the surrounding valley systems.
- **E: Gaddesden Lane Southern Slopes:** part of the Hertfordshire LCA Character Area 95 'Revel End Plateau'. Although part of the wider plateau, locally the Assessment Parcel consists primary of a north-east facing slope.
- **F: Revel End Slopes:** area forms a sloping transition from the Upper Vea Valley to the south-east, up to the more elevated plateau to the north-west. The southern, generally lower portion of the slopes are part of Hertfordshire LCA Character Area 96 'Upper Vea Valley', while the northern higher slopes are part of the Character Area 95 'Revel End Plateau'.
- **G: Upper Vea Valley:** part of the Hertfordshire LCA Character Area 96 'Upper Vea Valley', and consists of the valley floor, east facing slopes rising to Pancake Wood, and part of the lower north-west facing valley side extending as far as the Nickey Line and M1 motorway, to encompass the valley form and similar land uses either side of the Hemel Hempstead Road (B487).

Assessment Parcels Baseline

- 4.14 A baseline assessment for each assessment parcel is set out below in tabulated format (see Tables 2 to 8) taking into account the following:
- Landscape baseline and key features.
 - Visual baseline and key viewpoints.
 - Perceptual and experiential qualities.
 - Relationship with AONB and settlement edges.

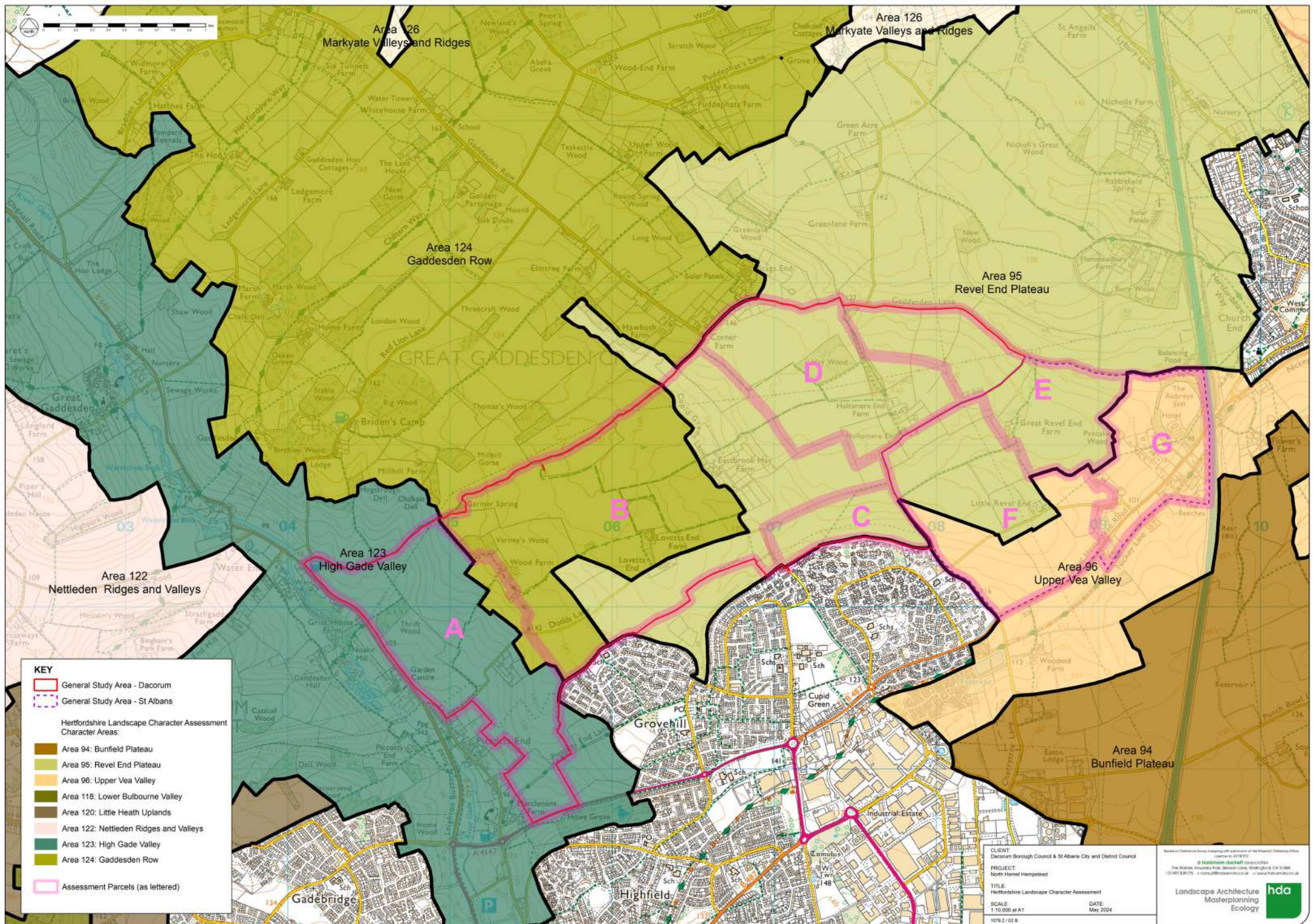


Figure 6 Hertfordshire LCA Character Areas

Table 2
Baseline Assessment: Parcel A - Gade Eastern Slopes

LANDSCAPE BASELINE AND KEY FEATURES	VISUAL BASELINE AND KEY VIEWPOINTS	PERCEPTUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL QUALITIES	RELATIONSHIP WITH AONB AND SETTLEMENT EDGES
<p>The Assessment Parcel is formed from part of the west facing slopes of Hertfordshire LCA Character Area 123 'High Gade Valley', with some minor amendments to the eastern boundary along the top of the slope to include the full extent of the west facing valley side.</p> <p>Landform is relatively steep falling towards the River Gade. Two minor valleys cut perpendicular to the main undulating slope. Slopes turn to face south at the southern end of the assessment parcel between Govehill and Piccotts End.</p> <p>The area consists of sweeping arable fields, the majority of which are large and irregularly shaped. An exception to this is a small area of smaller scale parcels of land including pasture and gardens, associated with Oatfield House, located on the upper slopes off Dodds Lane, which climbs approximately east-west up the slope through the middle of the assessment parcel. Oatfield House is the only dwelling on the otherwise undeveloped slopes. A line of pylons crosses the northernmost part of the area. Piccotts End Lane crosses the southern end of the area and several public rights of way cross the slopes.</p> <p>Fields are lined by a generally intact network of boundary hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees, but woodland is limited to a single block of ancient woodland known as Thrift Wood, in the northern portion of the assessment parcel.</p>	<p>The sloping landform within the assessment parcel affords views to the west and south across the Gade Valley, from the public rights of way within the area. Views are particularly expansive from the upper slopes, with views over hedgerows and Thrift Wood lower down the slope.</p> <p>There is distant intervisibility with the high ground of the Nettleden Ridges near Great Gaddeston on the opposite side of the Gade Valley, however public vantage points on the high ground which have views back to the site are relatively limited due the well vegetated nature of the ridges to the west. Exceptions to this include a short length of the Chiltern Way north of Boxted Farm (photograph 1) and adjacent to public footpath 71 south-west of Great Gaddesden (photograph 24).</p> <p>Distant views south from the upper slopes include parts of the built up area of Hemel Hempstead including tall buildings seen on the horizon. Undulating landform, including minor valleys perpendicular to the main slope limit the distance of north-south views in places, particularly lower down the slope.</p> <p>There are open views of the slopes from the AONB to the north, including from public footpath 38 south of Briden's Camp (photograph 2). Tree cover within the southern edge of the AONB restricts intervisibility with the slopes from the main body of the AONB elsewhere.</p> <p>Views of the slopes from along the valley bottom to the west, are limited by roadside vegetation along the B440, but there are occasional partial views in winter (photograph 23), and views above vegetation from Mill Close in both summer and winter (photo 14).</p>	<p>This is a rural farmed landscape with a pleasant aesthetic, composed of sloping fields draped with hedgerows and punctuated with mature trees within the hedgerows. Trees along the undulating boundaries and views to woodland beyond the slopes lend some sense of tree cover to the area, despite the paucity of woodland internally.</p> <p>Limited detracting features internally, include primarily a line of pylons through the northern portion of the site which continue along the edge of the AONB. Externally, there are noticeable views of development along the valley bottom and more distant views of the built up area of Hemel Hempstead, which have minor urban influence on the sloping landscape when part of the overall scene.</p> <p>With limited roads and development this is a peaceful landscape, particularly along footpaths to the north where a combination of topography and boundary vegetation provide local containment and a degree of remoteness away from urban influences.</p>	<p>The assessment parcel abuts the AONB to the north and continues into a small part of the AONB to the north-west, with the west facing slopes forming part of the immediate setting to the AONB. This part of the AONB exhibits some of the special qualities of the wider AONB, including significant woodland, and nearby parkland, however this level of tree cover and the parkland do not continue into the assessment parcel and there is only a limited sense of tranquilly given noticeable nearby human influence.</p> <p>The assessment parcel is visible from public footpath 38 within the AONB, and the edge of the AONB is identifiable from the northern portion of the Assessment Parcel slopes, but tree cover and boundary vegetation limits views into the main body of the AONB from the assessment parcel and vice versa.</p> <p>Public bridleway 39 runs east-west along the edge of the AONB where it adjoins the assessment parcel, with direct footpath connections into the AONB and the parcel.</p> <p>The assessment parcel abuts the settlement policy area of Hemel Hempstead to the south-east, where a public footpath wraps around the edge. Houses along the settlement edge are noticeable from the footpath through gaps in vegetation, but allocated land has yet to be developed and the adjacent settlement edge in this area has a limited influence on the rural slopes, in part due to the local ridge spur which helps separate Grovehill from Piccotts End and forms the sloping eastern setting to Piccotts End.</p>

Table 3
Baseline Assessment: Parcel B - Lovetts End Ridges and Valleys

LANDSCAPE BASELINE AND KEY FEATURES	VISUAL BASELINE AND KEY VIEWPOINTS	PERCEPTUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL QUALITIES	RELATIONSHIP WITH AONB AND SETTLEMENT EDGES
<p>The Assessment Parcel is formed from southern parts of Hertfordshire LCA Character Areas 95 'Revel End Plateau' and Character Area 124 'High Gade Valley' logically combined at a local level by a unifying pattern of topography and land cover.</p> <p>Landform consists of a series of shallow valleys and low ridges running broadly north-south across the length of the parcel, between the AONB to the north and Hemel Hempstead to the south. The valleys are relatively open and undeveloped, while the ridges have increased vegetation and farmsteads. The first ridge to the west includes the ancient woodland of Varney's Wood and trees associated with Wood Farm. Wood Farm is located on the ridge top and includes a number of large agricultural sheds. Lovetts End Farm is located on the next local ridge to the east. The farmstead with its large agricultural sheds, and a small group of dwellings off Dodds Lane are enclosed by significant tree cover. Further east is Eastbrook Hay, again with a number of large agricultural buildings, located along Cupid Green Lane and although not on the ridge top, is located on the slopes above the local valley feature further east.</p> <p>The area predominantly consists of large arable fields, with smaller paddocks associated with farmsteads. The hedgerow network breaks down in a number of places with signification lengths of field boundaries without hedges. Trees within remaining hedgerows are common and there are occasional small groups of trees. Dodds Lane runs broadly east-west through the southern half of the area, and is open on both sides with no roadside hedge for the majority of its length through the area. A network of public rights of way provide access across the majority of the area with linked into both the AONB and Hemel Hempstead.</p>	<p>The arrangement of landform and vegetation results in north-south views, particularly along the more open local valley features. East-west views are possible from internal footpaths and Dodds Lane, with views from higher ground to opposing valley sides, but are often more constrained or shortened by the treed north-south ridges between the valleys.</p> <p>The wooded AONB contains views out to the north, the edge of Hemel Hempstead restricts views to the south and landform helps contain views to the east and west, such that there is limited intervisibility with the wider landscape beyond the study area.</p> <p>The northern edge of Hemel Hempstead is visible from a considerable portion of the area, particularly in winter. Houses are identifiable from Dodds Lane, particularly in winter (photographs 20b and 21b), and at slightly greater distance from restricted byway 52 (photograph 22) and bridleway 50 which run through the middle of the area. In winter, houses along the settlement edge can be identified from the public rights of way along the northern end of the study area, including from part of the southern edge of the AONB, such as south of Millhill Gorse (east of Garmer Spring). In summer trees obscured the majority of built form along the settlement edge from this location (photograph 4), although Assessment parcel B is immediately open to view. Views into the assessment parcel from the main body of the AONB are limited by a combination of topography and tree cover (photographs 10, 12 and 13).</p> <p>Vegetation associated with Grovehill Playing Fields dips into the tail end of the local east-west valley feature along the settlement edge (assessment parcel C), allowing intervisibility between the higher ground to the north and the settlement edge (photographs 17 and 20b).</p>	<p>This is a rural landscape, albeit intensively farmed. Trees along boundaries and a block of ancient woodland at Varney's Wood, aid a pleasant aesthetic generally, but the lack of intact hedgerows along a number of large scale field boundaries and notable human influence, including views of development to the south, traffic along the open sided Dobbs Lane, agricultural sheds and general farming activity, tempers the landscape quality and limits the tranquillity of the area and any sense of remoteness.</p> <p>Boundary vegetation through the centre of the assessment parcel reduces the level of human influences to the north, and the southern edge of the AONB is relatively peaceful.</p>	<p>The adjoining part of the AONB exhibits some of the special qualities of the wider AONB, including significant woodland, however this level of tree cover does not continue into the assessment parcel and there is only a limited sense of tranquilly given noticeable nearby human influence.</p> <p>The area is part of a strip of land which separates the AONB from the settlement edge of Hemel Hempstead to the south. The assessment parcel abuts the AONB along its northern edge. This undulating area provides part of the southern setting to the AONB.</p> <p>Public bridleway 39 runs east-west along the edge of the AONB. However, there are no direct footpath connections into the main body of the AONB.</p> <p>Due to tree cover and a lack of public vantage points within the AONB, there is limited relationship between the main body of the AONB and the assessment parcel. However, the northern portion of the assessment parcel is visible at close range from the rights of way along the edge of the AONB and forms the designations immediate setting. Vegetation including hedges and trees filters views of the assessment parcel in the middle distance, however there are occasionally distance glimpses of the northern Hemel settlement edge from the edge of the AONB.</p> <p>Conversely there are occasional glimpses back to AONB edge from the settlement edge, including along the local valley feature east of Wood Farm. Vegetation along the south-western edge of the assessment parcel, including along the boundary with the Grovehill Playing Fields provide a treed setting to the settlement edge.</p>

Table 4
Baseline Assessment: Parcel C - Woodhall Valley

LANDSCAPE BASELINE AND KEY FEATURES	VISUAL BASELINE AND KEY VIEWPOINTS	PERCEPTUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL QUALITIES	RELATIONSHIP WITH AONB AND SETTLEMENT EDGES
<p>The Assessment Parcel is formed from part of the south-western corner of Hertfordshire LCA Character Area 95 'Revel End Plateau', which at a local level consists of an east-west valley feature along the settlement edge, at the end of the valley complex which continues east towards the Vea Valley. The subtle valley feature continues slightly westwards into Grovehill Playing Fields outside the study area. At the north-west corner the valley turns to form one of the minor north-south valleys through parcel B.</p> <p>The southern, north-facing slopes have been developed as part of the Woodhall Farm area of Hemel Hempstead. The valley bottom and south facing slopes within the assessment parcel remain undeveloped and consist of a large arable field. The area abuts a belt of trees along the settlement edge area, which is partially identified as ancient woodland and is edged to the north, east and west with intact hedgerows and trees. However, with the exception of a parkland style roundel there is no significant vegetation internally.</p> <p>The valley is publicly accessible with footpath 48 crossing diagonally through the field. There are informal paths around the edges of the field and bridleway 128 within trees along the southern edge, which connect to roads to the east and west.</p>	<p>There are obvious views along the length of the valley from public footpath 48 and informal walking routes within the assessment parcel. From lower ground within the valley views are contained by the tree belt to the south and the hedgerow along the break of slope to the north (photograph 18).</p> <p>The tree belt along the settlement edge obscure all but minor glimpses of built form in the winter. In the summer houses would be entirely hidden in views south towards the northern settlement edge.</p> <p>From the elevated north facing slopes to the west of the parcel, there are views north over hedgerows, of the undulating fields along the north-south valley within parcel B. The tops of pylons identifiable in the distance mark the southern edge of the AONB, but intervening landscape structure prevents any perceivable intervisibility between the assessment parcel and the AONB.</p> <p>Given the valley form and surrounding boundary vegetation, the assessment parcel is primarily inward looking. Views of the assessment parcel from vantage points within the wider landscape are relatively limited but the valley can be seen through gaps in vegetation from Grovehill Playing Fields and Dodds Lane to the west (photographs 17 and 20b).</p>	<p>This is a rural sloping field edged with tree cover. There are adjacent roads to the east and west and settlement to the south, but the potential detracting effect of these influences is largely mitigated by intervening vegetation.</p> <p>The tops of pylons are visible in the distance to the north and east, and there are small scale power lines through the field. However, despite its edge of settlement location, this is a relatively tranquil, pleasant area. The bridleway and footpath links along the northern edge allow local residents easy access to the countryside and a keen appreciation of the rural setting.</p>	<p>The east-west valley feature has no physical or visual links with the AONB, does not obviously share the special qualities of the AONB, and the contribution to the setting to the Chilterns is minimal.</p> <p>The valley forms the immediate northern setting to the Woodhall Farm part of Hemel Hempstead, and the public rights of way links along the edge of the settlement allow direct access to the countryside. The tree belt to the south forms a robust settlement edge and buffer between the built up area and the undeveloped rural landscape to the north.</p>

Table 5

Baseline Assessment: Parcel D - Holtsmere Plateau

<p>LANDSCAPE BASELINE AND KEY FEATURES</p>	<p>VISUAL BASELINE AND KEY VIEWPOINTS</p>	<p>PERCEPTUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL QUALITIES</p>	<p>RELATIONSHIP WITH AONB AND SETTLEMENT EDGES</p>
<p>The Assessment Parcel is part of the Hertfordshire LCA Character Area 95 'Revel End Plateau', and is formed from a plateau of relatively flat landscape above the surrounding valley systems.</p> <p>The area consists of a low density group of dwellings including the grade II listed Holtsmere Manor, with associated small scale parcels of land, primarily used as gardens with tennis courts and swimming pools etc, along with some arable fields which are generally squarer and of smaller scale than those within the majority of the study area.</p> <p>The area has significant tree cover, with trees associated with the small area of settlement, ornamental tree planting, Hay Wood, which is identified as ancient woodland, and tree belts, hedgerows and hedgerow trees along field boundaries.</p> <p>A network of public rights of way provide good access to the central and western portions of the assessment parcel.</p>	<p>Vegetation and buildings help contain views around the central more settled part of the assessment parcel. The less enclosed areas, including rights of way to west have intervisibility with the AONB edge to the north.</p> <p>From the lane within the eastern portion of the assessment parcel there are views of the AONB edge to the north, and distant views over lower ground to the south towards the built up area of Hemel Hempstead.</p> <p>Tree tops within the assessment parcel, including Hay Wood, are visible in views from rights of way within assessment parcel B and at greater distance from higher ground to the north-east, including along sections of public footpath 40 (photograph 5) and the Hertfordshire Way Long Distance Path (Bridleway 39) (photograph 9), and occasionally from the southern edge of the AONB through gaps in vegetation (photographs 6 and 11). However, tree cover within the assessment parcel and intervening, frequently obscures the main body of the assessment parcel.</p>	<p>The assessment parcel has a rural character with pleasant tree cover, notably including Hay Wood, which is keenly experienced along the public rights of way through the area.</p> <p>With no major roads internally the area is relatively peaceful and tranquil, however human influence in the form of pylons, low density dwellings and associated clutter limits any sense of remoteness.</p> <p>Tree cover aids scenic quality, however pylons crossing through the middle of the area often reduce scenic quality generally.</p>	<p>The assessment parcel abuts the AONB to the north and forms part of the general treed setting to the south of the AONB, but exhibits few of the special qualities associated with the wider AONB.</p> <p>There is limited relationship between the study area and main body of the AONB due to tree cover, low density settlement and associated human influences within the southern edge of the AONB.</p> <p>The area is remote from the settlement edge of Hemel Hempstead, but tree cover on the elevated plateau is identifiable in views north from north of the trees along the settlement edge.</p>

Table 6
Baseline Assessment: Parcel E - Gaddesden Lane Southern Slopes

LANDSCAPE BASELINE AND KEY FEATURES	VISUAL BASELINE AND KEY VIEWPOINTS	PERCEPTUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL QUALITIES	RELATIONSHIP WITH AONB AND SETTLEMENT EDGES
<p>The Assessment Parcel is part of the Hertfordshire LCA Character Area 95 'Revel End Plateau'. Although part of the wider plateau, locally the Assessment Parcel consists primary of a north-east facing slope. The slope rises up from a minor valley feature and climbs south to a high point of approximately 135m AOD and spur of local high ground to the south-east. Gaddeston Lane runs broadly east-west along the bottom of the valley and forms the northern edge of the Assessment Parcel. A lane to Holtsmere End descends the slope, crossing through the assessment parcel to join Gaddesden Lane. The western end of the parcel abuts a linear band of woodland located east of Hay Wood. To the east, the parcel ends where the landform turns to face east and The Aubreys fort.</p> <p>The area consists primarily of relatively large sloping arable fields, but also incorporates two narrower linear fields between Holtsmere End Lane and Great Revel End Farm. The majority of field boundaries and roadsides have hedgerows and trees, although there are gaps and the large field sizes reduce the sense of enclosure higher up the slope. Woodland is limited to small groups of trees. The area is unsettled except for Great Revel End Farm, which includes listed buildings, and a pair of dwellings along Gaddesden Lane. A single public right of way crosses the parcel, heading south from Gaddesden Lane. Lines of pylons travel up the slope, converging at the edge of the Assessment Parcel.</p>	<p>The slopes can be seen internally from public footpath 10 (photograph 30), and there are close range partial views into the Assessment Parcel from the northern end of Holtsmere End Lane and through gaps in vegetation along Gaddesden Lane (photograph 31), but elsewhere vegetation obscures nearby views.</p> <p>The general north-east facing aspect of the slopes and layers of intervening vegetation limit views of the area from further afield to the south. However, the slopes, boundary vegetation and pylons are visible across the local valley from several elevated vantage points to the north, in particular along public footpath 40 (see photograph 5a). The slopes are more difficult to perceive at greater distance to the north including from along the Hertfordshire Way Long Distance Path (public bridleway 39) due to intervening topography and vegetation (photograph 9). There is distant intervisibility with high ground to the east of the M1, but limited public vantage points with views of the Assessment Parcel. The main exception is along public footpath 12 where there are gaps in intervening vegetation (see photographs 8, 38 and 39). The Assessment Parcel is not perceivable from Redbourn (photographs 36, 37 and 40) due to topography and intervening features. The slopes can be identified in clear weather at greater distance from public footpaths 6 and 20 on elevated ground to the east of Redbourn (photographs 41 and 42), but form a very limited part of the overall view at a distance of approximately 3km and seen in context with Redbourn closer in the view.</p> <p>Views of the slopes from the edge of the AONB are frequently restricted by the linear woodland and Hay Wood to west of the Assessment Parcel and vegetation along Green Lane. However, the slopes are open to view in the middle distance from the southern end of Green Lane, and are perceivable through occasional gaps in vegetation further north, including at the western end of footpath 40, near the edge of the AONB (see photograph 6).</p>	<p>The majority of the slopes comprise one side of a rural local valley feature, and as such primarily form a relatively inward looking peaceful landscape, mostly shielded from external detracting influences.</p> <p>The landscape consists of pleasant sloping farmland with treed boundaries and limited built form, although pylons have an adverse effect on scenic quality generally and distant noise from the M1 reduces the sense of tranquillity to the east.</p>	<p>The very north-west corner of the Assessment Parcel abuts a corner of the AONB. However, a small area of woodland partially separates the area from the AONB and the area exhibits few of the special qualities of the wider AONB.</p> <p>There is intervisibility between the slopes and the edges of the AONB along the southern end of Green Lane, however the is limited relationship between the main body of the AONB and the slopes due to few public vantage points and intervening vegetation (see photograph 10).</p> <p>The north-east facing slopes are relatively distant from the settlements of Hemel Hempstead to the south and Redbourn beyond the M1 to the east and separate from their immediate setting.</p>

Table 7
Baseline Assessment: Parcel F - Revel End Slopes

LANDSCAPE BASELINE AND KEY FEATURES	VISUAL BASELINE AND KEY VIEWPOINTS	PERCEPTUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL QUALITIES	RELATIONSHIP WITH AONB AND SETTLEMENT EDGES
<p>The area forms a sloping transition from the Upper Veia Valley to the south-east, up to the more elevated plateau to the north-west. The southern, generally lower portion of the slopes are part of Hertfordshire LCA Character Area 96 'Upper Veia Valley', while the northern higher slopes are part of the Character Area 95 'Revel End Plateau'.</p> <p>The area has relatively subtle slopes, facing generally south-eastwards on gentle slopes above the Upper Veia Valley, but also crosses a minor dry valley feature to a small area facing north-east at the southern corner of the assessment parcel, adjacent to the settlement edge of Hemel Hempstead.</p> <p>The Assessment Parcel abuts Hemel Hempstead Road (B487) to the south, and lanes to the west and north. A further narrow lane runs east-west through the middle of the area. Settlement is limited to Little Revel End farmstead and a group of three dwellings along northern edge. The area abuts the settlement edge of Hemel Hempstead to the south-west, albeit buffered by trees along Holtsmere End Lane. The area consists primarily of relatively large arable fields with occasional smaller pastoral fields associated with the farmstead and dwellings to the north. Boundaries are generally vegetated with hedgerows and trees, but there are gaps and field amalgamation has occurred. Public footpath 11 cross the area and connects with footpaths 10 and 9 within the eastern portion of the Assessment Parcel.</p>	<p>Internally there are views of the undeveloped fields from public footpaths 9, 10 and 11 which cross the Assessment Parcel. Views from the more elevated footpath 11 are relatively wide ranging where there are gaps in vegetation along the adjacent field boundaries, with some limited views to fields and pylons on rising ground to the east beyond the M1. Views are more contained lower down from footpaths 9 and 10 due to boundary vegetation and topography, including where they cross through the middle of fields. Views of the slopes from adjacent roads are frequently obscured by roadside vegetation although there are occasional close range glimpses over hedgerows or through gaps along Hemel Hempstead Road on the approach into the town (see photograph 34) and through occasional gaps in roadside vegetation along Holtsmere End Lane (see photograph 26).</p> <p>Further from the Assessment Parcel, the area is visually contained to the north by a minor ridge line running east-west from Pancake Wood through to Hay Wood. To the south, there are glimpses of the slopes through gaps in vegetation, from footpath 13 (see photograph 25) and within the vicinity of listed buildings associated with Woodend Farm. The Nickey Line is primarily enclosed by vegetation restricting views from along the route. However, there are occasional glimpses through minor gaps in vegetation during winter and a single viewpoint with clear open views of the Assessment Parcel all year round (see photograph 7). There is intervisibility with rising ground to the east of the M1, but viewpoints with discernible views of the Assessment Parcel are limited (see photographs 8, 38 and 39). The area is not perceivable from Redbourn (photographs 36, 37 and 40) and difficult to identify from elevated ground east of Redbourn (photographs 41 and 42).</p>	<p>This is a rural farmed landscape with a pleasant composition of fields and boundary vegetation on undulating landform, experienced at close hand from public rights of way within the area. There is no significant woodland, but trees along boundaries including within hedgerows provide layers of vegetation giving the area a treed feel.</p> <p>A line of pylons are a prominent detracting feature through the middle of the Assessment Parcel and reduce scenic quality. Pylons and distant road noise limit the sense of tranquillity and remoteness. Urban influence from the edge of Hemel Hempstead is limited due to vegetation along Holtsmere End Lane.</p>	<p>The minor ridge from Pancake Wood to Hay Wood, plus intervening tree cover on this higher ground, separates the Assessment Parcel from the AONB to the north-west and limits any meaningful contribution to the AONBs southern setting. The parcel exhibits few of the special qualities of the wider AONB.</p> <p>The undeveloped fields and the minor dry valley within the southern corner of the assessment parcel form the immediate eastern context to the adjacent area of Hemel Hempstead, however tree cover either side of Holtsmere End Lane forms a robust settlement edge.</p> <p>The Assessment Parcel is relatively distant from the western edge of Redbourn and has a limited visual relationship with the settlement, however the slopes provide part of the wider undeveloped separation between Hemel Hempstead and Redbourn which help maintain the separate identities of the town and village.</p>

Table 8
Baseline Assessment: Parcel G - Upper Vea Valley

LANDSCAPE BASELINE AND KEY FEATURES	VISUAL BASELINE AND KEY VIEWPOINTS	PERCEPTUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL QUALITIES	RELATIONSHIP WITH AONB AND SETTLEMENT EDGES
<p>The Assessment Parcel is part of the Hertfordshire LCA Character Area 96 'Upper Vea Valley', and consists of the valley floor, east facing slopes rising to Pancake Wood, and part of the lower north-west facing valley side extending as far as the Nickey Line and M1 motorway, to encompass the valley form and similar land uses either side of the Hemel Hempstead Road (B487). Hemel Hempstead Road runs along the valley floor, with the 'Nickey Line' roughly parallel to the south-east of the road. Most of the former Harpenden to Hemel Hempstead railway (known as the Nickey Line) is now part of the National Cycle Network. A single public right of way, footpath 9, descends the east facing slopes, and runs between The Aubreys scheduled monument and the M1 to connect with Gaddesden Lane.</p> <p>The area consists primarily of dispersed low density settlement, agricultural buildings, traveller sites and a hotel, interspersed with associated paddocks and other small parcels of mainly pastoral land. Exceptions to this are a central larger arable field, and grassland north of the small Pancake Wood. The northernmost portion of the Assessment Parcel includes the remains of The Aubreys fort scheduled monument, encircled by trees. Other small tree groups, boundary vegetation including trees associated with residential properties, trees along the Nickey Line and parkland style trees within fields, give the area a treed feel and soften development.</p>	<p>There are internal views of the Assessment Parcel from along public footpath 9. The majority of views from this route are enclosed by vegetation, topography and buildings, however there are also open views south to Hemel Hempstead Road, across the central undeveloped field crossed by the footpath.</p> <p>Views from the Nickey Line are contained by tree cover and earthworks along the route.</p> <p>The central undeveloped field and areas of settlement enclosed by tree cover are visible to motorists on Hemel Hempstead Road as it passes through the Assessment Parcel along the valley floor (see photograph 35). Views from Gaddesden Lane to the north and the lane within the south-west portion of the Assessment Parcel are primarily restricted by hedgerows and other roadside vegetation.</p> <p>The majority of the Assessment Parcel is set down in a local valley feature, and assimilated into the wider rural landscape by tree cover, limiting its visual envelope and prominence in more distant views. Tree tops, in particular those surrounding The Aubreys Fort, form part of the general tree cover likely to be glimpsed over the M1, but the main body of the Assessment Parcel is not perceivable from Redbourn or footpaths to the east of Redbourn. The eastern end of the Assessment Parcel, including The Aubreys Fort is open to view over the M1 from the nearby northern end of public footpath 12 (see photograph 38).</p>	<p>Public footpath 9 runs through the length of Assessment Parcel providing an experience of varying qualities of area, including areas of low density settlement, the enclosed wooded area around The Aubreys Fort and the more open sloping arable field towards the centre of the Assessment Parcel.</p> <p>The Assessment Parcel includes pleasant fields and tree cover including Pancake Wood and trees within fields. However, the presence of obvious human influence, including dispersed development, the busy Hemel Hempstead Road and adjacent M1 adversely effect the general scenic quality of the area. Road noise in particular, including from Hemel Hempstead Road and the M1, limits the sense of tranquillity and prevents any feeling of remoteness.</p>	<p>Intervening topography and vegetation to the north-west prevents any tangible relationship between the Assessment Parcel and the AONB. The parcel does not overtly exhibit any of the special qualities of the AONB.</p> <p>The Assessment Parcel is separated from Hemel Hempstead by intervening undeveloped slopes to the south-west, and is not part of the immediate setting to the town. The Assessment Parcel is separated from Redbourn by the M1 corridor to the north-east.</p> <p>However, the area is part of the wider landscape between Hemel Hempstead and Redbourn which helps maintain the separate identities of the two settlements. The valley already contains a considerable amount of low density development, and a single field forms the main appreciation of separation between developed areas when travelling along the portion of Hemel Hempstead Road located within the Assessment Parcel. The undeveloped fields sloping down to the road within the adjacent Assessment Parcel F are more effective at creating a sense of separation between Hemel Hempstead and Redbourn than the landscape within Assessment Parcel G.</p>

5 LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY

Introduction

- 5.1 Building on previous studies, a sensitivity assessment has been carried out for each Assessment Parcel to enable a finer grain identification of the varying sensitivity across the study area, thereby enabling development to be directed away from areas of greatest sensitivity from a landscape and visual perspective. The approach to this assessment follows guidance and criteria provided by Natural England and the Landscape Institute as referenced in the methodology described in Section 2.
- 5.2 Detailed sensitivity analysis (including the specific methodology used) is set out within Appendix B. The results are summarised briefly below and are mapped on Figure 7.

Assessment Parcel A: Gade Eastern Slopes

- 5.3 The Gade Eastern Slopes has a number of criteria judged to have High susceptibility and the majority of value criteria are judged to be High-Medium. The sloping landform and limited settlement gives the area a notable rural character and therefore High susceptibility in terms of landform, sense of place and settlement pattern. Walkers along the public rights of way are particularly susceptible and are also considered to be High. A limited number of criteria have been judged as Medium susceptibility or value, but the weight of evidence indicates that the assessment parcel has a **High sensitivity** overall. The west facing, relatively open slopes have limited consistency with the existing development pattern, and provide separation between Piccotts End and Grovehill, and would not be suitable for significant development from a landscape perspective.
- 5.4 Any development should be on a small scale and take into account the landscape guidance and principles set out in the April 2020 Dacorum Borough Landscape Sensitivity Study, page 134.

Assessment Parcel B: Lovetts End Ridges and Valleys

- 5.5 The Lovetts End Ridges and Valleys are considered to have **Medium sensitivity** from a landscape perspective. There is a general gradation in sensitivity from north to south, reducing in sensitivity to the south away from the AONB and towards the settlement edge.
- 5.6 The area may be able to accommodate development in defined situations without significant character change or adverse effects subject to detailed assessment and design taking into account the susceptibility and value analysis.

Assessment Parcel C: Woodhall Valley

- 5.7 Compared to other parts of the study area, this local east-west valley feature has relatively limited landscape/visual characteristics which are susceptible to change and has values which are low to medium. Development would have an adverse effect on the character of the area itself, but could be in keeping with the adjacent existing settlement edge, would be localised and unlikely to affect the wider rural landscape.
- 5.8 This relatively self contained area predominately faces the existing settlement edge, albeit heavily treed, and has limited relationship to the AONB. The tree belt along the southern edge is a high value feature and immediate recreational benefits for the residents of Hemel Hempstead are a consideration. Overall the Woodhall Valley is considered to have **Medium sensitivity** from a landscape perspective.

Assessment Parcel D: Holtsmere Plateau

- 5.9 This is a highly rural area with high value features which should be retained, and has no relationship to significant areas of settlement. The area would only be consistent with settlement pattern if developed in combination with other assessment parcels. Landscape structure is sensitive but could provide a framework for mitigation if the area is developed. Treed skylines should be maintained. The Holtsmere Plateau is considered to have **High-Medium sensitivity** from a landscape perspective.

Assessment Parcel E: Gaddesden Lane Southern Slopes

- 5.10 This is a rural area close to the AONB and with no relationship to any significant development. The lower valley sides are relatively contained but isolated from existing settlement. Development on the upper slopes would be notable, and potentially skyline, in views from the north, including from the edge of the AONB and likely to be identified in views from elevated vantage points east of the M1, albeit distant. Landscape structure along field boundaries would benefit from additional tree planting and closing gaps in the hedgerow network.
- 5.11 The Gaddesden Lane Southern Slopes are considered to have above average susceptibility and value, with a **High-Medium sensitivity** from a landscape perspective overall.

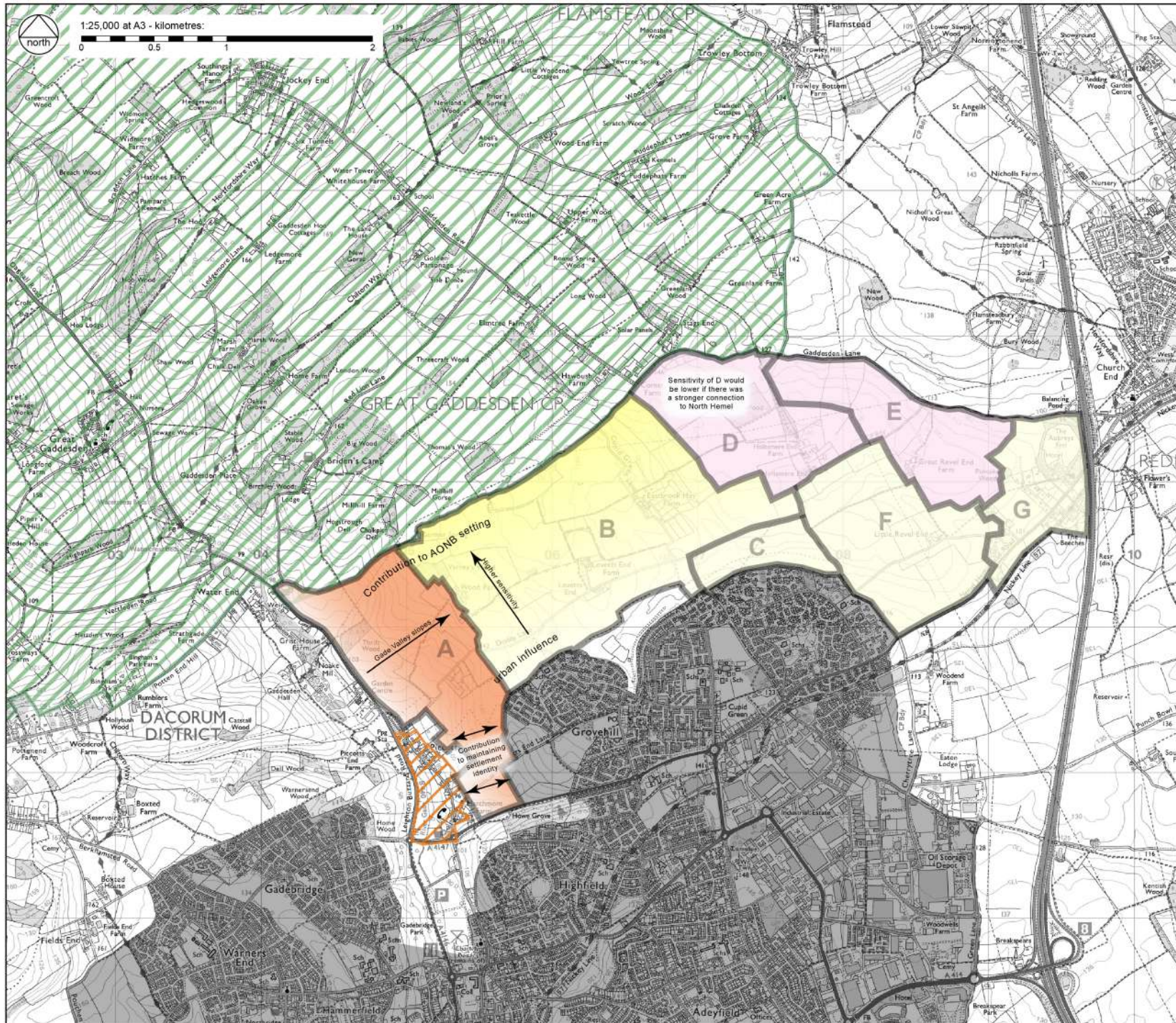
Assessment Parcel F: Revel End Slopes

- 5.12 This is an rural area with limited development, forming the wider valley side, but with a moderate landscape structure and influence from pylons and roads which reduce the areas susceptibility. The area forms a part of the separation between Hemel Hempstead and Redbourn. On balance, the Revel End Slopes parcel is considered to have **Medium sensitivity** from a landscape perspective.

Assessment Parcel G: Upper Veal Valley

- 5.13 The Assessment Parcel is identifiable as a local valley feature, as experienced along public footpath 9 and Hemel Hempstead Road. The area has a limited visual envelope and tree cover creates enclosure, however considerable dispersed development has an adverse effect on scenic quality and limits the sense of rurality. The busy Hemel Hempstead Road and adjacent M1 limit tranquillity. The Aubreys Fort scheduled monument is set down adjacent to the M1 rather than on the upper slopes.
- 5.14 The Assessment Parcel forms part of the separation between Hemel Hempstead and Redbourn, although given the presence of existing development within the area, the parcel has a less effective contribution

to separation than the undeveloped fields of Assessment Parcel F adjacent to the west. On balance, the Upper Veal Valley parcel is considered to have **Medium sensitivity** from a landscape perspective.



KEY

- General study area - Dacorum
- General study area - St Albans
- Assessment parcels
- Settlement policy area
- AONB
- Conservation area

Landscape Sensitivity
(incorporating landscape and visual susceptibility and value):

- High
- High-Medium
- Medium
- Low-Medium
- Low

CLIENT:
Dacorum Borough Council and
St Albans City and District Council

PROJECT:
North Hemel Hempstead

TITLE:
Assessment Parcels Landscape Sensitivity

SCALE AT A3: 1:25,000 DATE: May 2024

1079.2 / 13 F

Based on Ordnance Survey mapping with permission of Her Majesty's Stationery Office
Licence no. A018732

© hankinson duckett associates
The Stables, Howbery Park, Benson Lane, Wallingford, OX10 8BA
t 01491 838175 e consult@hda-environment.co.uk w www.hda-environment.co.uk

Landscape Architecture
Masterplanning
Ecology **hda**

Figure 7 Assessment Parcels Landscape Sensitivity

6 GREEN BELT

Introduction

- 6.1 The Study area lies within Green Belt. In order for the allocation to move forward, land would need to be removed from the Green Belt and a new Green Belt boundary would need to be created.
- 6.2 This section of the report looks at:
- Planning policy concerning Green Belt;
 - The Green Belt Assessments that have been undertaken to date for each district; and
 - The key findings from each assessment.
- 6.3 A proposed design response for the allocation, taking into account the background review, Green Belt review and following landscape sensitivity assessment is presented in section 7, and includes a recommended Green Belt boundary for the allocation. Assessment of this potential development area is then assessed against the purposes of the Green Belt in section 9.

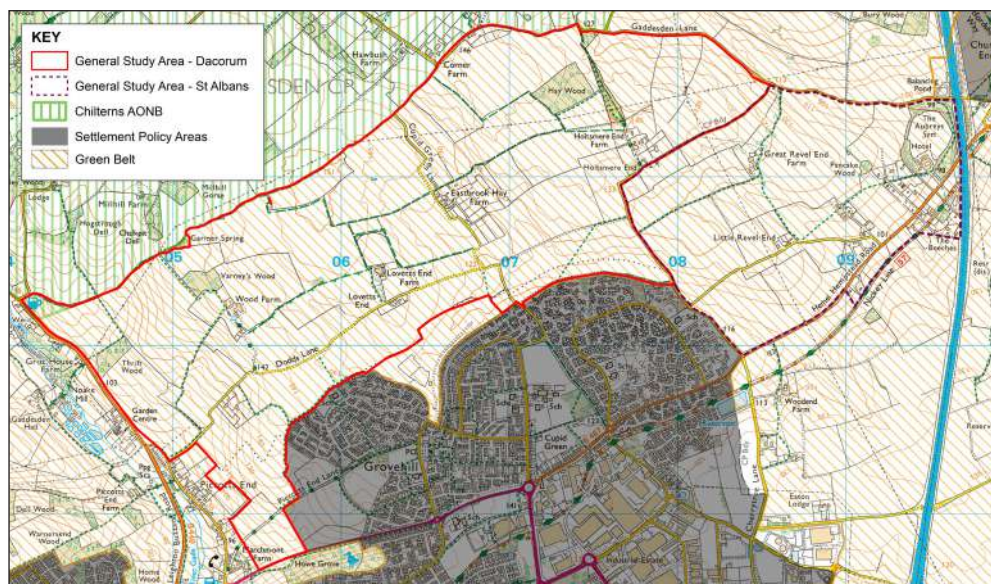


Figure 8 Extent of Green Belt Covering the Study Area

Green Belt Policy

- 6.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the following guidance regarding the alteration of Green Belt within a Local Plan review. The 20 December 2023 revision of the NPPF is considered here, however a revised version of the NPPF is currently being consulted on.
- 6.5 The study area is washed over by Green Belt (as shown on Figure 8). *'The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.'* (Paragraph 142). Chapter 13 of the Framework sets out policies for 'Protecting Green Belt Land'.
- 6.6 Paragraph 143 lists the five purposes of the Green Belt. These are:
1. to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 2. to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 3. to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 4. to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 5. to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land
- 6.7 Paragraphs 144 to 150 set the context for Green Belt review. Paragraph 145 considers the review of Green Belt boundaries: *'Once established, there is no requirement for Green Belt boundaries to be reviewed or changed when plans are being prepared or updated. Authorities may choose to review and alter Green Belt boundaries where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, in which case proposals for changes should be made only through the plan-making process.'* Both councils are in the process of preparing a Local Plan and both are considering the review of Green Belt boundaries.

6.8 Paragraphs 147 and 148 consider the review and definition of Green Belt boundaries:

'147. When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries, the need to promote sustainable patterns of development should be taken into account. Strategic policy-making authorities should consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary. Where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously-developed and/or is well-served by public transport. They should also set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land.'

148. When defining Green Belt boundaries, plans should:

- a) ensure consistency with the development plan's strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development;*
- b) not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open;*
- c) where necessary, identify areas of safeguarded land between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period;*
- d) make clear that the safeguarded land is not allocated for development at the present time. Planning permission for the permanent development of safeguarded land should only be granted following an update to a plan which proposes the development;*
- e) be able to demonstrate that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the plan period; and*
- f) define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.'*

6.9 Paragraph 150 considers the possible benefits to the Green Belt:
'Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for

opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land.'

- 6.10 Paragraphs 154 and 155 describe occasions where development may not be considered inappropriate in the Green Belt, which include:
- *the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it'* (para 154 b);
 - *'local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location'* (para 155 c); and
 - *'material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds)'* (para 155 e).

Green Belt Studies

- 6.11 A number of Green Belt studies have been undertaken for the study area. These are summarised on the following page and include a Stage 1 Green Belt Review Purposes Assessment that covers both districts, a Stage 2 Green Belt Review for each district, authored by the same firm, and additional studies following on from the Stage 2 Green Belt Review, for Dacorum.
- 6.12 Within the Stage 1 Green Belt Review Purposes Assessment, the study area was represented by Parcel 16B, with a small section of the study area to the south-west (adjacent to Piccotts End) covered by Parcel 16A.

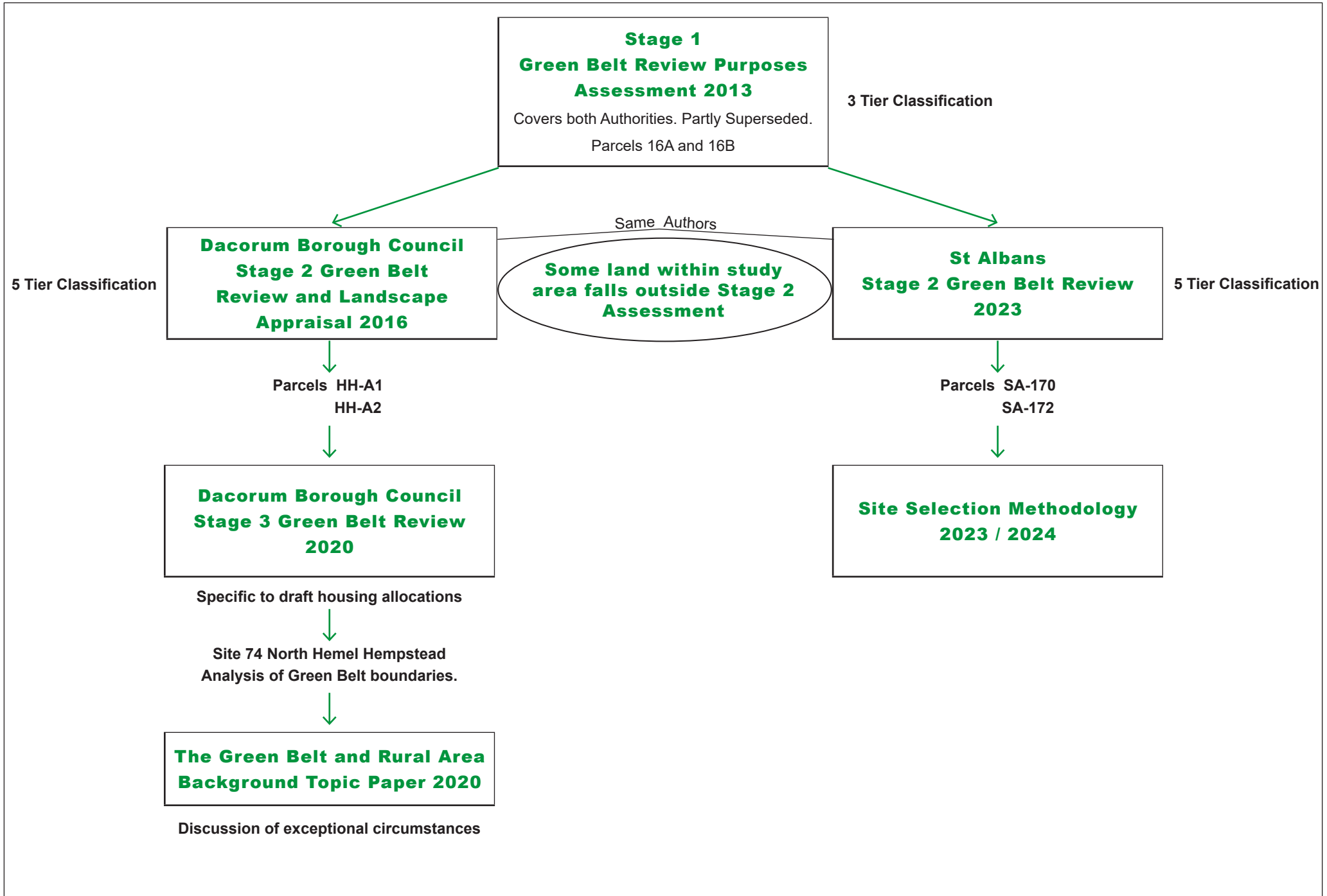
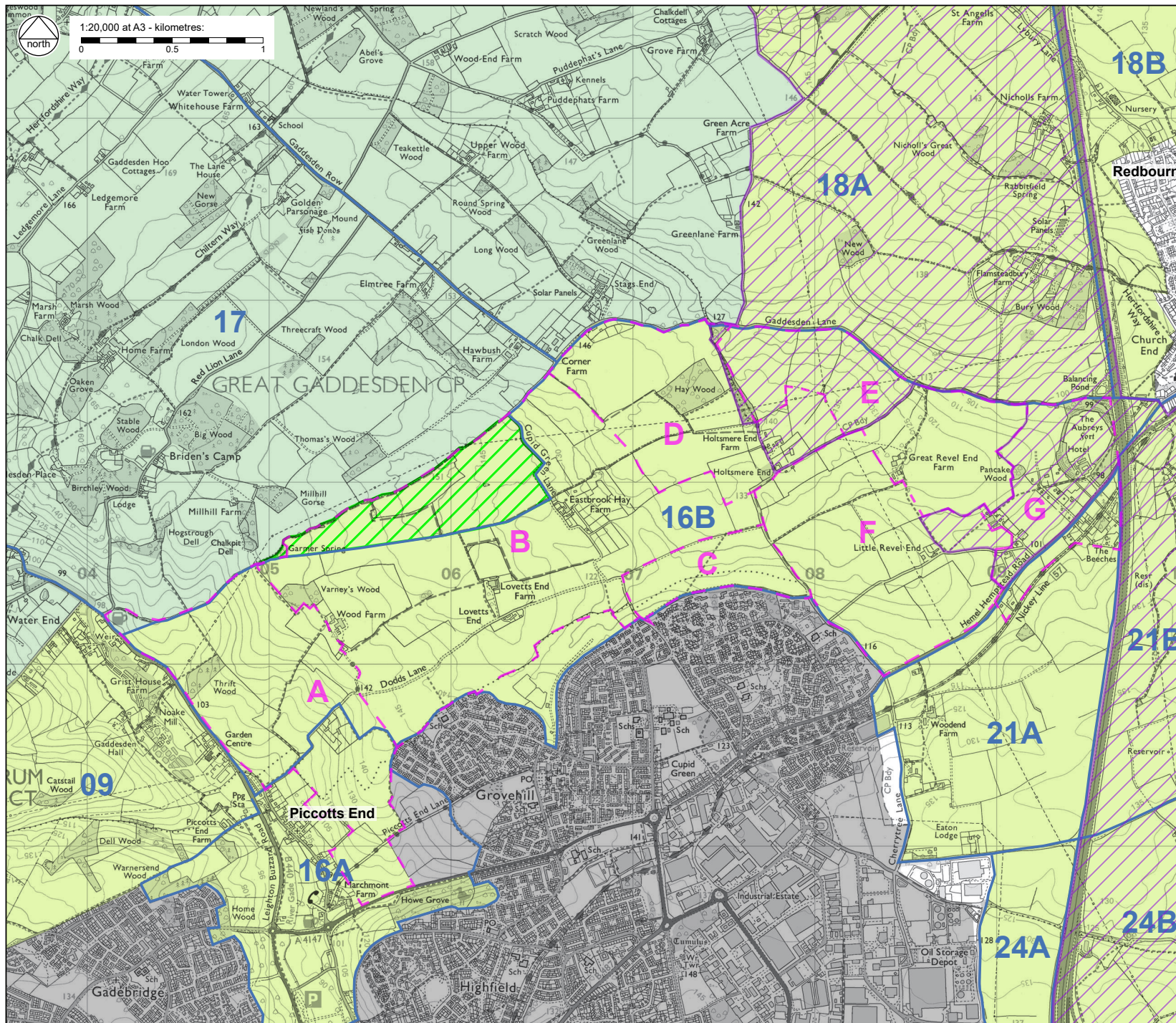


Figure 9 Summary of Green Belt Assessments Undertaken to Date



KEY

- Assessment Parcels
- AONB
- Hemel Hempstead settlement area
- Green Belt
- Stage 1 Green Belt Reviews
- Green Belt to be added
- Land not covered within Stage 2 Green Belt Review

CLIENT:
Dacorum Borough Council and
St Albans City and District Council

PROJECT:
North Hemel Hempstead

TITLE:
Green Belt Review Areas Stage 1

SCALE AT A3: 1:20,000 DATE: April 2024

1079.2 / 111

Based on Ordnance Survey mapping with permission of Her Majesty's Stationery Office
Licence no. AB187372

© **hankinson duckett associates**
The Stables, Howbery Park, Benson Lane, Wallingford, OX10 8BA
t 01491 838175 e consult@hda-enviro.co.uk w www.hda-enviro.co.uk

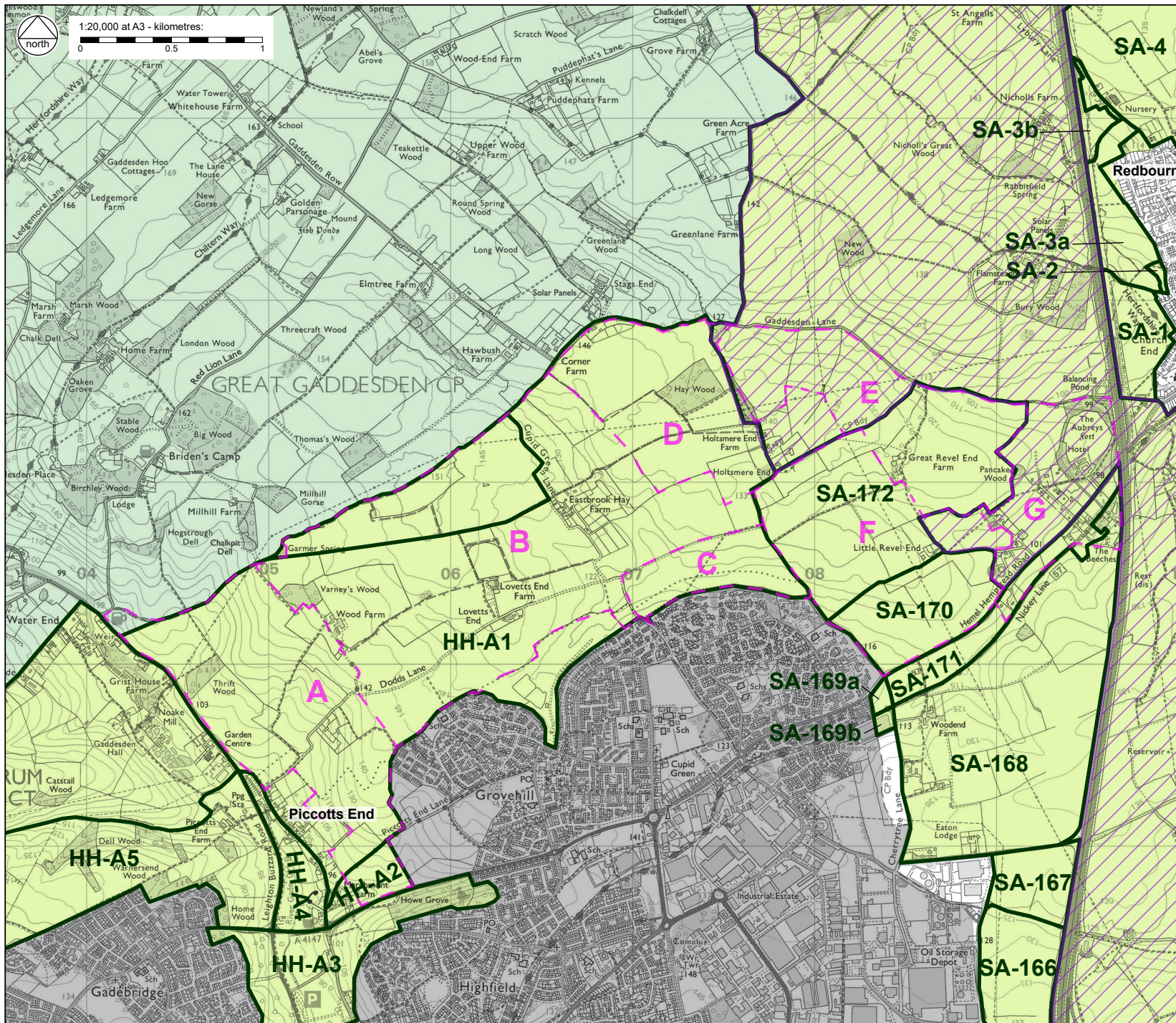
Landscape Architecture
Masterplanning
Ecology

Figure 10 Green Belt Review Areas Stage 1

6.13 Table 9 summarises the performance of each specific Assessment Parcel against the four purposes of the Green Belt. Key differences in methodology are summarised in the table overleaf. Differences in Methodology can cause discrepancies in assessment as shown for Purpose 1 in the comparison of Green Belt performance.

Table 9: Key Differences in Methodology

	Stage 1 Green Belt Review Purposes (commissioned jointly by Dacorum, St Albans and Welwyn and Hatfield local authorities)	Dacorum Borough Council Stage 2 Green Belt Review and Landscape Appraisal 2016	St Albans Stage 2 Green Belt Review 2023
PURPOSE 1 To check the unrestrained sprawl of large built-up areas	Large Built up areas defined as London, Luton, Dunstable and Stevenage. Hemel Hempstead is not considered to be a large built-up area. The parcels within the study area are not adjacent to a large built up area.	Hemel Hempstead is included within the list of settlements that are considered to be Large built-up areas. The parcels within the study area are therefore adjacent to a large built up area.	Hemel Hempstead is included within the list of settlements that are considered to be Large built-up areas. The parcels within the study area are therefore adjacent to a large built up area.
PURPOSE 2 To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	Hemel Hempstead and St Albans are included within the list of settlements that are considered to be Towns. Redbourn is not.	Hemel Hempstead, St Albans and Redbourn are included within the list of settlements that are considered to be Towns.	Hemel Hempstead, St Albans and Redbourn are included within the list of settlements that are considered to be Towns.
PURPOSE 3 To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Countryside is open land with a general absence of built development and urbanising influences, and is characterised by rural land uses including agriculture and forestry.	Considers both openness and the extent to which the Green Belt can be characterised as 'countryside' in a functional sense.	Considers both openness and the extent to which the Green Belt can be characterised as 'countryside' in a functional sense.
PURPOSE 4 To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Many of the settlement are considered to represent historic towns, however Hemel Hempstead is not considered as one.	There are no historic towns within the assessment.	St Albans is considered to be a historic town.



CLIENT:
Dacorum Borough Council and
St Albans City and District Council

PROJECT:
North Hemel Hempstead

TITLE:
Green Belt Review Areas Stage 2

SCALE AT A3: 1:20,000 DATE: April 2024

1079.2 / 112

Based on Ordnance Survey mapping with permission of Her Majesty's Stationary Office
Licence no. AR187372

© hankinson duckett associates
The Stables, Howbery Park, Benson Lane, Wallingford, OX10 8BA
t 01491 638175 e consult@hda-enviro.co.uk w www.hda-enviro.co.uk

Landscape Architecture
Masterplanning
Ecology



Figure 11 Green Belt Review Areas Stage 2

- 6.14 The respective Stage 2 Assessments are more up-to-date and have a higher degree of commonality and detail. They are thus considered to be the most relevant to this study.
- 6.15 The Dacorum Stage 2 Green Belt Review (2016) assessed and scored areas of the Borough against the purposes of the Green Belt. The Dacorum portion of the study area was assessed as having a strong contribution to the Green Belt, but was assessed as a large single area (sub-area HH-A1), with a much smaller parcel (sub-area HH-A2) to the south-west at Marchmont Farm. An extract of the scoring tables from the report for sub-areas HH-A1 and HH-A2 is included in Appendix D.
- 6.16 Within the assessment there were a total of 57 sub-areas assessed for the borough. Individual assessments for each sub-area were provided within Annex 1 of the study. 40 sub-areas were considered to contribute in some form to Purpose 1 of the Green Belt as they were located adjacent to a large built-up area. Of these, 33 were considered to contribute moderately to Purpose 1, including sub-areas HH-A1 and HH-A2. Both sub-areas connect to Hemel Hempstead and both were considered to have weaker areas of Green Belt boundary.
- 6.17 With regards to Purpose 2, 44 sub-areas were assessed as having some contribution, with 19 having a weak contribution (including sub-area HH-A2), 16 having a moderate contribution (including HH-A1) and 9 having a strong contribution. Within the assessment at Annex 1, sub-area HH-A1 was considered to contribute towards the gap between Hemel Hempstead and Redbourn, particularly to the north-east. While sub-area HH-A2 was not considered to contribute to the separation between towns, it was noted that at a local level, it did assist in maintaining the separate settlement identity of Piccotts End.
- 6.18 All of the sub-areas assessed within the study were considered to contribute to Purpose 3 of the Green Belt to some extent. 18 were considered to contribute weakly, 25 moderately and 14 strongly. Sub-area HH-A1 was considered to contribute strongly to this purpose, due to the limited amount of development and open nature of the sub-area. It was noted that the land adjacent to Hemel Hempstead had some urbanising influences, but that the remainder of the sub-area had a strong, unspoilt rural character. Sub-area HH-A2 lies adjacent to an allocation on the edge of Hemel Hempstead, which was considered to diminish the rurality of the area.
- 6.19 The sub-areas were not assessed against purpose 4 of the Green Belt as it was considered that none of the settlements within the borough were considered to represent 'historic towns'.
- 6.20 Within the study, any sub-areas that contributed strongly to one or more Green Belt purposes were considered to contribute strongly to the aims and purposes of the Green Belt. HH-A1 was therefore considered to be strongly contributing (along with 22 other sub-areas) and HH-A2 was considered to be moderately contributing (along with 19 other sub-areas).
- 6.21 The Dacorum Stage 3 Green Belt Review went on to consider other constraints to development within the sub-areas. 7 sub-areas were considered to be significantly constrained. None of these lie within the study area. Both sub-areas were considered to be relatively unconstrained and were recommended to be taken forward for further assessment within table 5.4.
- 6.22 The St Albans Stage 2 Green Belt Review (2023) considered and scored sites covering approximately two thirds of the St Albans portion of the study area. The review split the district into 182 sub-areas for assessment, with a focus on areas adjacent to existing settlement, that were promoted for development. Sub-area SA-172 of the Green Belt review covers the eastern half of Assessment Parcel E and the northern portion of Assessment Parcel F. Sub-area SA-170 covers the southern portion of Assessment Parcel F. The areas within HDA Assessment Parcel G are not included in the review, however the band of land between Hemel Hempstead Road and the Nickey Line is included as

sub-area SA-171. Extracts of the scoring tables from the report for sub-areas SA-170 and SA-172 are included in Appendix D.

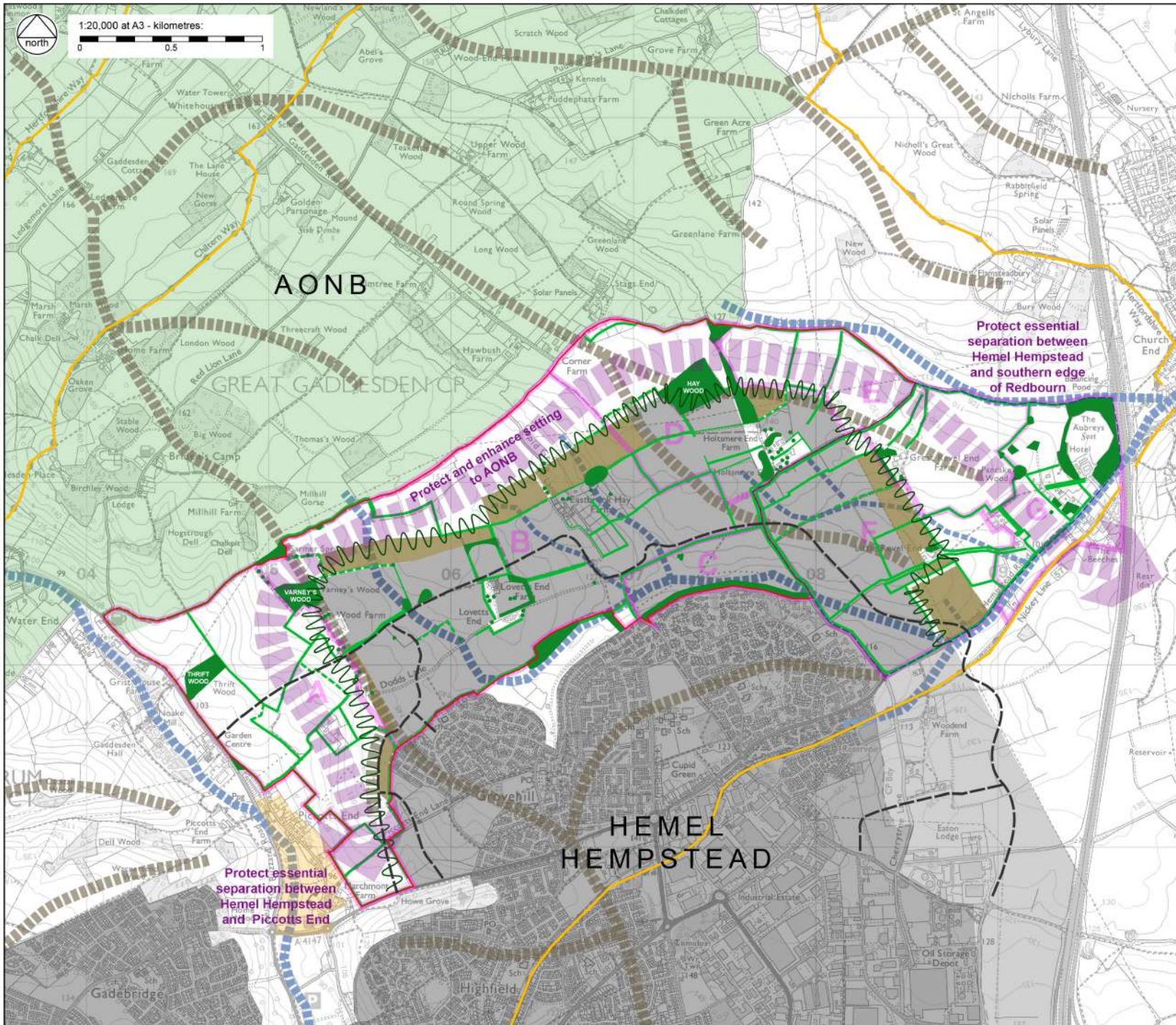
- 6.23 59 sub-areas were considered to contribute in some form to Purpose 1 of the Green Belt as they were located adjacent to a large built-up area. Of these, 43 were considered to contribute highly to Purpose 1, including sub-areas SA-170 and SA-172. Both sub-areas connect to Hemel Hempstead and both were considered to have weaker areas of Green Belt boundary.
- 6.24 With regards to Purpose 2, 47 sub-areas were assessed as having some contribution, with 90 having a weak contribution, 33 having a moderate contribution (including sub-area SA-170) and 12 having a strong contribution (including sub-area SA-172).
- 6.25 Within the assessment at Annex 1, the supporting text for sub-area SA-170, with respect to Purpose 2 states that:
'The sub-area forms a wider part of the gap between Redbourn and Hemel Hempstead, contributing to the overall openness and scale of the gap. It is judged that there may be some scope for development without significant physical or perceptual erosion of the gap between neighbouring built-up areas.'
- 6.26 Within the review, sub-area SA-172 was considered to form almost the entire gap between Redbourn and Hemel Hempstead and that development of the whole sub-area would lead to coalescence.
- 6.27 The largest proportion of the sub-areas (86) were considered to contribute strongly to Purpose 3 of the Green Belt. This includes sub-areas SA-170 and SA-172, which contain limited built form and were considered to display an unspoilt and rural character.
- 6.28 Neither sub parcel (SA-170 or SA-172) were considered to contribute to Purpose 4 of the Green Belt. Both parcels were considered to contribute strongly to the Green Belt overall.

Green Belt considerations

- 6.29 While it is clear that both Stage 2 Green Belt reviews consider that the parcels within the study area contribute strongly to the purposes of the Green Belt, these results need to be taken in the context that the respective Green Belt reviews assume that the whole of the sub-area would be built out. The results are also limited to a review of the purposes of the Green Belt and do not consider wider Green Belt policy.
- 6.30 Key considerations highlighted by the findings of the stage 2 Green Belt reviews include:
- Ensure that the proposed development pattern is complimentary to the existing settlement identity of Hemel Hempstead and does not constitute sprawl.
 - Consolidate the development area to make the best use of land.
 - Maintain physical and visual separation between Hemel Hempstead and Redbourn.
 - At a local level, seek to maintain the separate settlement identities of Hemel Hempstead and Piccotts End.
 - Seek to protect the more sensitive areas of the countryside within the study area (covered within earlier sections of this report).
 - Introduce appropriate mitigation planting in order to minimise the visual effects on openness within retained areas of Green Belt.
- 6.31 Key considerations set out within national planning policy:
- The allocation should promote sustainable patterns of development.
 - The allocation should be well-served by public transport.
 - Provide clearly defined Green Belt boundaries.
 - Consider ways to offset the impact of removing land from the Green Belt, through improvements to / beneficial uses within the remaining Green Belt. These could include improved access, new sport and recreation facilities, landscape enhancement and improvements for wildlife and biodiversity.
 - Consider the appropriateness of having some of the open space land uses required for the allocation (for example transport infrastructure or land provided for recreation) retained within the Green Belt, beyond a proposed new boundary, in order to minimise encroachment into the Green Belt.

7 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

- 7.1 This section of the report looks at the development and consideration of the allocation to be put forward for the regulation 19 iterations of the two Local Plans. The proposals needed to respond to the following criteria:
- To include sufficient land for the allocation to be viable.
 - To maintain the setting to the Chilterns National Landscape (AONB).
 - To identify land to be removed from the Green Belt, along with a proposed new Green Belt boundary; and
 - To respond to the intrinsic character and sensitivity of the receiving landscape
- 7.2 Consideration of the previous studies, baseline conditions, Green Belt review, sensitivity assessment and wireframe testing has been used in order to try and minimise the potential adverse effects of the proposals.
- 7.3 A range of design options were considered. These were tested through the production of the wireframe montages provided within Appendix C. The wireframes enabled the testing and analysis of the potential visual intrusion of different development parcels from key viewpoint locations, with a focus on views from the AONB. It has helped define the location and likely visual effect of potential development at the break of slope above the Gade Valley and off-set from the edge of the AONB. Iterative wireframe testing has also informed where potential landscape structure could be successfully incorporated to reduce landscape and visual effects further.
- 7.4 Analysis has led to the following conclusions. Development should be focused on the least sensitive areas, namely Assessment Parcels B, C, F and the southern parts of Parcel D. There may be some scope for development within Parcel A where areas are in association with the existing settlement boundary, assimilated into the landscape by existing and proposed landscape structure and do not weaken the separate identity of Piccotts End from Hemel Hempstead. Parcel G already contains a considerable amount of development and its few remaining open fields are important in maintaining the sense of separation between Hemel Hempstead and Redbourn.
- 7.5 Development within Assessment Parcels B, C, D and F should utilise retained and enhanced landscape structure to provide a framework for built form. There is also potential to restore historic field boundaries lost since the 1900s with further structure planting. Proposals should maintain an undeveloped setting to the AONB.
- 7.6 Parcel E is within a well defined valley landform, distant from existing settlement, close to the AONB and visible from the other side of the valley. Built form development in Assessment Parcel E is unlikely to be suitable from a landscape and visual perspective. Parcel D is also currently distant from significant settlement. However this is likely to change if the allocation comes forward, and if some development were to occur it could be associated with adjoining Assessment Parcels to the south-west and integrated with tree cover and the small scale settlement associated with Holtsmere End Farm. Hay Wood is the most sensitive part of Parcel D. It would be retained within the Green Belt and should be protected from development.
- 7.7 The eastern end of Assessment Parcel F (east of the pylons) continues to fall primarily eastwards and is generally set down and more contained than the higher slopes to the north-west of Little Revel End, and the adjoining existing development either side of the lane to Little Revel End could form a logical eastern edge to development. However, the primarily undeveloped nature of Assessment Parcel F can be appreciated from Hemel Hempstead Road and this helps maintain the separate identities of Redbourn and Hemel Hempstead.



KEY

- General study area - Dacorum / St Albans
- Assessment Parcels (lettered A to G)
- National Landscape (AONB)
- Existing settlement areas
- Long distance paths
- Existing woodland/tree groups
- Existing hedgerows (including hedgerow trees)
- Existing gappy hedgerows
- Ridgelines
- Flooding risk
- Opportunity to create a robust Green Belt boundary
- Potential development areas - to include public open space and incidental open space as appropriate
- Areas more suitable to sustainable settlement edge land uses, primarily open space/pitches/play areas/allotments, but could in some cases accommodate low height, lower density built development if supported by detailed assessment.
- Indicative course of potential new roads

Note: It is anticipated that areas outside the proposed Green Belt boundary could be used for SANG and Green Belt compliant open space

CLIENT:
Dacorum Borough Council and St Albans City and District Council

PROJECT:
North Hemel Hempstead

TITLE:
Landscape Structure Overlay

SCALE AT A3: 1:20,000 DATE: May 2024

1079.2 / 14 H

Based on Ordnance Survey mapping with permission of Her Majesty's Stationary Office Licence no. AB187372

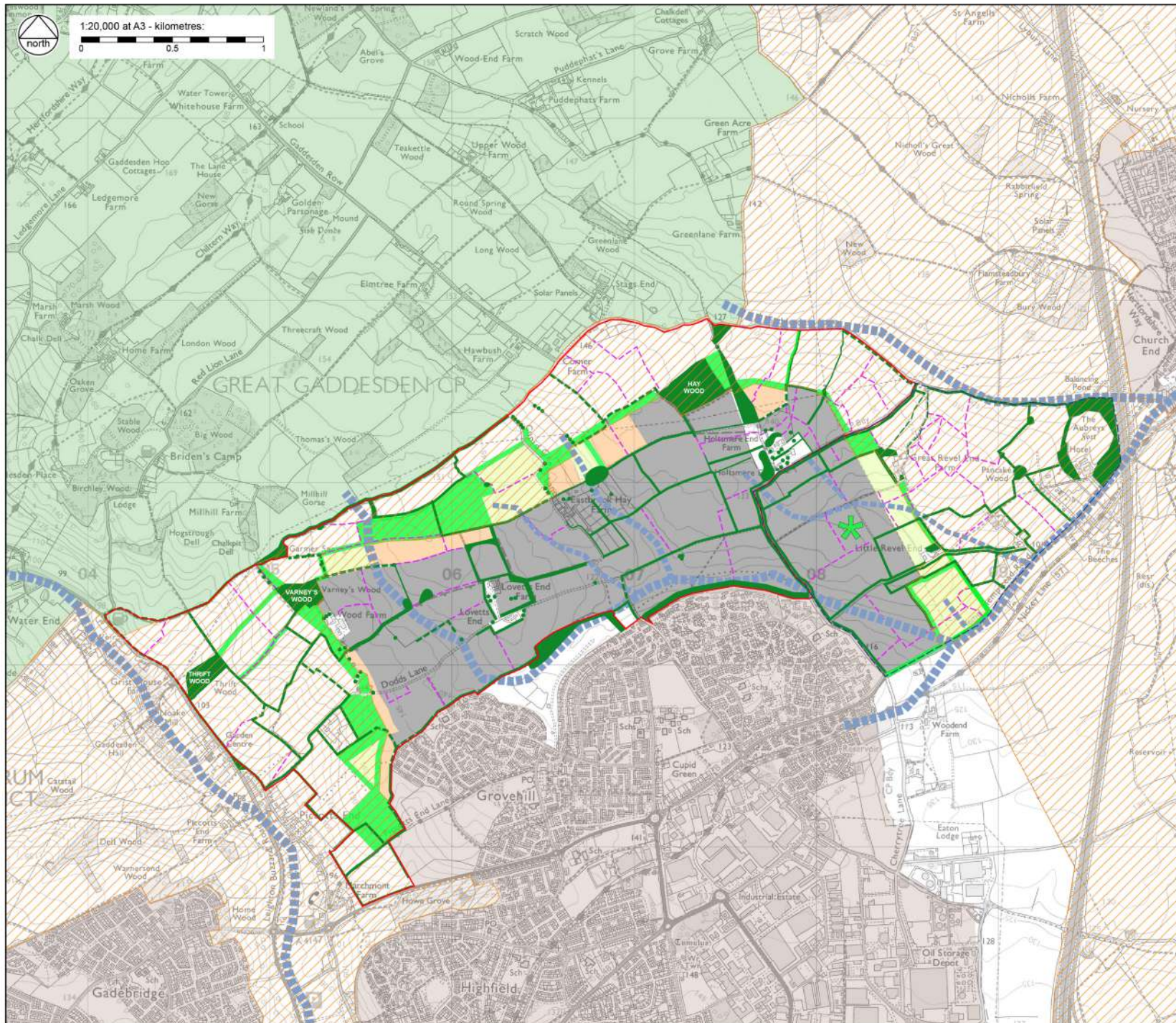
© hankinson duckett associates
The Stables, Howbery Park, Benson Lane, Wallingford, OX10 8BA
101491 838175 • consult@hda-enviro.co.uk • www.hda-enviro.co.uk

Landscape Architecture Masterplanning Ecology **hda**

Figure 12 Landscape Structure Overlay

8 RECOMMENDED POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT EXTENT, MITIGATION AND GREEN BELT BOUNDARY

- 8.1 A recommended scenario of development extent, potential landscape structure and refined Green Belt boundary is mapped on Figure 13. Figure 12 shows the overarching strategy for the potential allocation. It identifies how the development has been pulled back from the edge of the AONB. The existing landscape structure could be enhanced to contain views of the proposed development area.
- 8.2 A new Green Belt boundary could follow existing lines of woodland and tree belts, which could be complemented by additional features. These elements are characteristic of the local landscape and adjacent AONB. Land to the east and west of the study area would be retained within the Green Belt. This includes the Gade Valley Slopes (Parcel A) to the west, which have a high landscape and visual sensitivity and parcels E and G to the east, which contribute to the separation between Hemel Hempstead and Redbourn.
- 8.3 New areas of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), required for development in proximity to the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC, should be located between the edge of the allocation and the AONB. This would enable enhancements to landscape character, which would complement the special qualities of the AONB and include further mitigation planting (in the form of woodlands and tree belts), which would reduce the effects of the development on the setting to the AONB.
- 8.4 Figure 12 illustrates a potential landscape strategy of retained and enhanced landscape structure to help assimilate development into the landscape and reduce visual effects on the AONB and rural views towards the study area. Woodland blocks should be protected and where possible enhanced with improved management. The local green infrastructure could be improved over time by increasing woodland and bolstering vegetation along existing field boundaries to create corridors of landscape structure along restored historic field boundaries.
- 8.5 An arrangement of connected retained, enhanced and new woodland, trees and hedgerows in keeping with the local landscape character could provide a robust boundary for a revised Green Belt boundary and limit visual effects, particularly where development would be seen on the skyline, such as from the west across the Gade Valley.
- 8.6 The proposals respond to the key Green Belt considerations set out within paragraphs 6.30 and 6.31 of this report by:
- Creating a sustainable urban extension to Hemel Hempstead, with a development pattern that is complementary to the main settlement and with opportunities to be well-served by sustainable transport links.
 - Consolidating the development area to make the best use of land.
 - Creating a clearly defined Green Belt boundary (mapped on Figure 12) using existing features, which could be strengthened through new characteristic planting.
 - Maintaining the physical and visual separation between Hemel Hempstead and Redbourn by keeping development behind the local ridgeline associated with Great Revel End Farm and maintaining a sense of separation along Hemel Hempstead Road. A substantial area of open land would be retained within the Green Belt between the two settlements.
 - Maintaining the separate settlement identities of Hemel Hempstead and Piccotts End by retaining the majority of the Gade Valley slopes within the Green Belt.
 - Protecting the more sensitive areas of the countryside within the study area.
 - Introducing appropriate mitigation planting in order to minimise the visual effects on openness within retained areas of Green Belt.
 - The potential locations of proposed SANG could provide improvements to / beneficial uses within the retained Green Belt. These could include improved access, new sport and recreation facilities, landscape enhancement and improvements for wildlife and biodiversity.



KEY

- General study area - Dacorum / St Albans
- National Landscape (AONB)
- Existing settlement areas
- Boundaries lost since 1900s mapping
- Existing woodland/tree groups
- Existing hedgerows (including hedgerow trees)
- Existing gappy hedgerows
- Flooding risk
- Recommended structure planting in keeping with existing landscape character of hedgerows and linear tree lines along boundaries, small tree groups, occasional woodland blocks and parkland style individual or clusters of trees within fields.
- Development area should include internal landscape structure such as tree lines along green corridors connected to planting within areas of incidental open space to break up built form in particular on sloping landform and higher ground.
- Potential development areas incorporating open space/landscape structure as appropriate (subject to flood information and other constraints)
- Areas which could accommodate low height (2 storey or lower), lower density built development, or open space, from a landscape and visual perspective if supported by detailed assessment.
- Areas more suitable to Green Belt compatible land uses, primarily open space/pitches/play areas/allotments.
- Potential Green Belt revised within study area

CLIENT:
Dacorum Borough Council and
St Albans City and District Council

PROJECT:
North Hemel Hempstead

TITLE:
Potential Landscape Structure & Developable Extents

SCALE AT A3: 1:20,000 DATE: May 2024

1079.2 / 51 C

Based on Ordnance Survey mapping with permission of Her Majesty's Stationary Office Licence no. A0181372

© hankinson duckett associates
The Stables, Howbery Park, Benson Lane, Wallingford, OX10 8BA
101491 838175 • consultants@hda-environment.co.uk • www.hda-environment.co.uk

Landscape Architecture
Masterplanning
Ecology

Figure 13 Potential Landscape Structure Strategy

9 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS OF POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

- 9.1 The likely landscape and visual effects of the identified potential development scenario associated with each Assessment Parcel is assessed at a high level in Tables 10 to 16, based on the scenario presented in Figure 13. The magnitude and significance of these effects would be subject to detailed design.
- 9.2 Areas likely to experience the greatest effects are those where development would occur within areas of higher susceptibility and sensitivity to the type of development proposed, namely Parcel D and the northern portion of Parcels B closed to the AONB. Likely effects are summarised in tabulated form below.
- 9.3 The likely landscape and visual effects of the potential development as a whole are summarised in the final table in this section, Table 17.
- 9.4 The potential development as a whole is considered against each of the four relevant purposes of the Green Belt in Table 18.

Table 10: Outline Assessment of Potential Effects: Parcel A - Gade Eastern Slopes

<p>POTENTIAL LANDSCAPE EFFECTS (Assuming no mitigation)</p>	<p>POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF VISIBILITY (Assuming no mitigation)</p>	<p>POTENTIAL EFFECTS ON THE AONB (Assuming no mitigation)</p>	<p>POTENTIAL TO AVOID OR REDUCE ADVERSE EFFECTS (Assuming with mitigation)</p>
<p>The majority of the parcel would be retained, with development restricted to vehicular access and a small area of development to the south-east of the parcel.</p> <p>Retention of the sloping arable fields edged with hedgerows, and Thrift Wood, would allow the intrinsic rural character of the west facing slopes, and the existing irregular field pattern, to be maintained for the majority of the valley side.</p> <p>However, without mitigation, the new built form at the top of the slope would be a detracting feature.</p> <p>There would be some loss of grade 3 arable land and minor loss of vegetation along the B440 to facilitate access, however the vast majority of mature hedgerows, frequent hedgerow trees and ancient woodland of Thrift Wood across the area would be retained.</p>	<p>Views to and from the undeveloped slopes, including from public rights of way within the assessment parcel are particularly susceptible to development.</p> <p>Maintaining the majority of the slopes free from built development would limit adverse visual impact from surrounding vantage points, including rights of way on elevated vantage points to the west and routes through the AONB. However, without mitigation, the edge of development within the adjacent assessment parcel would be visible beyond the break of slope, noticeably adding to built form visible on the horizon, in particular in views from elevated vantage points to the west (see photomontage 1).</p> <p>New development would primarily be seen in context with existing and allocated development along the settlement edge. However, the existing settlement edge is primarily filtered by tree cover, whereas new development could initially appear as a hard urban edge until potential landscape structure has established.</p>	<p>The southern edge of the AONB is open to the northern end of the assessment parcel and there is close range intervisibility with the site from public footpath 38 within the AONB.</p> <p>The edge of development within the adjoining assessment parcel would likely be glimpsed across the slopes and beyond the break of slope, in views from footpath 38, but would form a limited feature on the skyline (see photomontage 2), having a minimal effect on the tranquillity of the AONB.</p> <p>Restricting development within the parcel would limit effect on the immediate setting to the AONB (within the vicinity of the eastern slopes). The woodland and hedgerows within the parcel, which reflect the special qualities of the designated landscape, would be unaltered.</p>	<p>Retention and enhancement of the existing landscape features across the slopes, including the hedgerows, hedgerow trees and Thrift Wood, should form the key component of any mitigation strategy, and provide a framework for new landscape structure. New planting along existing, restored and new field boundaries, and pockets of woodland at appropriate junctures along with an enhanced hedgerow network which ties in with existing landscape features, would improve the landscape structure and tree cover of the west facing slopes. In combination this would help assimilate development into the landscape over time and limit adverse effects on the local landscape character.</p> <p>Once matured, a broadly north-south arrangement of new and existing landscape structure, including Varney's Wood, would provided a treed horizon from viewpoints within the AONB to the north-west of the assessment parcel and from elevated viewpoints to the west. These would be in keeping with existing wooded skylines, would be reflective of the special qualities of the AONB found to the north, and would filter/obscure views of built form on the horizon (see photomontages 1 and 2).</p> <p>Retained ancient woodland within the development parcel could benefit from an improved management regime and there are opportunities for increased public access with new pedestrian routes primarily along fields boundaries, including those created as part of a restoration of the historic field pattern.</p> <p>These mitigation measures outlined could substantively reduce the predicted effects, both on the receiving landscape and on the setting to the AONB.</p>

Table 11: Outline Assessment of Potential Effects: Parcel B - Lovetts End Ridges and Valleys

<p>POTENTIAL LANDSCAPE EFFECTS (Assuming no mitigation)</p>	<p>POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF VISIBILITY (Assuming no mitigation)</p>	<p>POTENTIAL EFFECTS ON THE AONB (Assuming no mitigation)</p>	<p>POTENTIAL TO AVOID OR REDUCE ADVERSE EFFECTS (Assuming with mitigation)</p>
<p>The parcel has a lower sensitivity than other parcels within the study area, which indicates that it is more suitable for development. The scale of development proposed, would result in a localised but large scale change in the landscape character of the parcel, from rural fields, to areas of extensive housing and associated infrastructure, albeit reduced by a degree of existing urban influence. The primary focus of the proposed development is to the south, adjacent to the existing settlement, while the higher sensitivity landscape to the north of the parcel would be retained as countryside.</p> <p>Development should seek to retain existing high sensitivity landscape features such as the ancient Varney's Wood, as well as other mature trees and hedgerows wherever practical, to form part of the landscape structure incorporated into the scheme. It is likely that some trees and hedges would be lost to facilitate development and associated infrastructure. The majority of the grade 3 arable fields would be lost.</p> <p>Development across a large proportion of the area is likely to have a moderate to high adverse landscape effect within the proposed development area without mitigation. This level of effect would not be unusual for a development of this scale. The strong existing landscape structure within the receiving landscape would limit the effects of the potential development on the wider rural landscape.</p>	<p>There would be open views of proposed development from the public rights of way which cross through this parcel. The area has internal view corridors along the broadly north-south valley features between the AONB to the north and settlement edge to the south. Development within this parcel would result in significant change to the view, particularly when looking north towards the rural landscape along these corridors. Views south, would be similarly affected, albeit the magnitude of change would be marginally lower where there are existing views of settlement.</p> <p>Further from the Assessment Parcel, views of proposed development would be obscured or filtered by existing settlement (within the existing built up area to the south) and intervening vegetation (within the southern edge of the AONB to the north). Topography locally and in the wider area would result in some distant views of development at the western edge of the Assessment Parcel, from elevated viewpoints to the west, including from the Chiltern Way (see photomontage 1). Despite being relatively distant and consistent with the existing settlement edge, development would be noticeable on the skyline, thereby increasing its magnitude of effect. Given the abundance of public vantage points internally, the visual effect of development is likely to be high adverse on vantage points within the parcel, but lower from the wider landscape and settlement edge, although this is subject to detailed assessment.</p>	<p>Development within the Assessment Parcel would bring settlement closer to the edge of the AONB, and could initially have an adverse effect on the landscape setting to the AONB.</p> <p>However, the potential adverse effects on views from the edge of the AONB, the setting to the AONB, and sense of tranquillity within the AONB would be reduced by maintaining a substantial belt of open space to the north of the parcel, between the AONB and proposed development. There would be no direct effects on the character or special qualities of the Chilterns.</p> <p>Views of the development from the main body of the AONB would be limited given the degree of tree cover and paucity of public vantage points within the southern portion of the AONB. From bridleway 39 along the boundary of the AONB there are occasional, relatively distant glimpses of the existing settlement edge to the south, particularly during winter, seen through gaps in vegetation within the Assessment Parcel.</p> <p>This reduces the susceptibility of views along the edge of the AONB marginally in places, but views from the majority of the AONB edge would be adversely affected without mitigation, and the width of the rural undeveloped setting to the AONB reduced.</p>	<p>As much existing landscape structure should be protected and retained as possible, in particular the ancient woodland and other tree groups. Gaps in hedgerows should be infilled where practical. A combination of retained landscape features along intact field boundaries, and new structural planting along reinstated historic boundary alignments (as identified on Figure 12) could provide a strong framework for potential development parcels.</p> <p>Bolstering existing boundary vegetation and providing new hedgerows with trees and pockets of woodland would create a network of landscape structure which could enhance green infrastructure in the area generally, and over time help to assimilate development into the landscape, thereby reducing adverse effects on landscape character and views towards development.</p> <p>Creation of considerable areas of characteristic woodland, parkland (woodpasture) and enhanced hedgerows along the northern edge of the parcel (potentially in association with SANG creation) would further reduce predicted landscape and visual effects with regards to the setting of the AONB and could enable enhancements to landscape character in this area. Open space and structure planting should be implemented at an early phase in the development, with planting able to protect the setting to the AONB in perpetuity.</p>

Table 12: Outline Assessment of Potential Effects: Parcel C - Woodhall Valley

<p>POTENTIAL LANDSCAPE EFFECTS (Assuming no mitigation)</p>	<p>POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF VISIBILITY (Assuming no mitigation)</p>	<p>POTENTIAL EFFECTS ON THE AONB (Assuming no mitigation)</p>	<p>POTENTIAL TO AVOID OR REDUCE ADVERSE EFFECTS (Assuming with mitigation)</p>
<p>The parcel has a lower sensitivity than other parcels within the study area, which indicates that it is more suitable for development.</p> <p>Internal landscape features within this Assessment Parcel are limited to grade 3 classified agricultural land and a parkland style roundel. Whilst the majority of the arable field would be replaced by development, it is anticipated that the roundel and the considerable hedgerows and mature trees around the perimeter of the field would be retained and incorporated into the landscape structure of the development, thereby limiting potential adverse effects on higher sensitivity landscape features.</p> <p>Development would initially have an adverse effect on the landscape character of the local valley feature, however housing on the south facing slope would be in keeping with existing settlement pattern on the north facing slope, and would face towards the current settlement edge. The valley floor is likely to remain free from built development due to the risk of flood, thereby maintaining a corridor of open space through the parcel.</p> <p>Given the limited landscape features, development would initially likely have a moderate adverse landscape effect, however exact magnitude and significance of these effects would be subject to detailed design. Effects of development within the parcel, on the wider rural landscape would be limited.</p>	<p>If maintained on its existing alignment, there would be open views of development from public footpath 48 along the top of the valley then diagonally across the valley bottom.</p> <p>Development within the bottom of the valley would be relatively contained, but houses toward the top of the slopes may be visible from further afield, including from nearby public rights of way to the north-west. Development within the Assessment Parcel would likely be identifiable in the background of north-easterly views from parts of Grovehill Playing Fields, replacing the current glimpses of undeveloped countryside with built form.</p> <p>Development within the valley is predicted to initially have a moderate to high adverse effect on views within the vicinity of the Assessment Parcel, reducing in effect from more distant vantage points, although this is subject to detailed assessment.</p>	<p>This area has a limited relationship to the AONB, and intervening vegetation and the inward looking nature of the valley would minimise any effects of development on views from the edge of the AONB and limit any effect on the general southern landscape setting to the AONB.</p> <p>The majority of the parcel faces south away from the AONB, and any effects on the special qualities of the AONB, such as the high degree of tree cover, hedgerows and sense of tranquillity within the AONB would be negligible.</p>	<p>Trees along the existing settlement boundary to the south should be protected and retained. Other perimeter vegetation should be bolstered where appropriate to offset adverse effects to landscape features and character.</p> <p>Open space maintained along the valley floor should be designed to take account of the flood risk and where possible take advance of potential inundation to aid the variety of landscape proposals across the study area.</p>

Table 13: Outline Assessment of Potential Effects: Parcel D - Holtsmere Plateau

<p>POTENTIAL LANDSCAPE EFFECTS (Assuming no mitigation)</p>	<p>POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF VISIBILITY (Assuming no mitigation)</p>	<p>POTENTIAL EFFECTS ON THE AONB (Assuming no mitigation)</p>	<p>POTENTIAL TO AVOID OR REDUCE ADVERSE EFFECTS (Assuming with mitigation)</p>
<p>Without mitigation, development would lead to a considerable change in the landscape character of the southern portion of the parcel, from rural fields and low density settlement, to areas of extensive housing and associated infrastructure.</p> <p>The high sensitivity (ancient) Hay Wood, would be retained within the Green Belt in order to protect it in the long term, as would the fields to the north of Hay Wood, along the southern edge of the AONB. Approximately 50% of the grade 3 arable fields would be retained.</p> <p>Any development should retain existing significant landscape features including mature trees and hedgerows wherever practical to form part of the landscape structure. However it is likely that some trees and hedges would be lost to facilitate development and associated access.</p> <p>Development is focussed on the lowest sensitivity areas of the parcel, which relate most strongly to the remainder of the proposed urban extension. Given the high landscape sensitivity, development would likely have a high adverse landscape effect within the development area. However, the retention of Hay Wood and other structural landscape would limit the effects of the development on the wider rural landscape. The exact magnitude and significance of these effects would be subject to detailed design.</p>	<p>There would be open views of proposed development from the public rights of way which cross through this area. Development within this area would result in notable adverse change to the character of the baseline view, particularly in views from internal public bridleways 44 and 47.</p> <p>Development south of Hay Wood would be obscured and/or partially filtered when looking south-east from the western end of Gaddesden Lane along the southern edge of the AONB (see photograph 11), by a combination of the woodland, boundary vegetation and vegetation along the lane, lessening the effect on views.</p> <p>Elsewhere, existing dwellings and associated human influences would reduce the magnitude of change marginally, but nevertheless development would have a notable effect on views from nearby vantage points and to a lesser degree where the plateau is visible at greater distance in the wider landscape.</p> <p>From elevated viewpoints to the north-east, including public footpath 40 (see photographs 5 and 6), views of the Assessment Parcel are primarily obscured by intervening vegetation, however houses within the eastern end would be visible towards the skyline.</p>	<p>Tree cover, low density settlement and associated human influences within the southern edge of the AONB help separate the Assessment Parcel from the main body of the AONB further north.</p> <p>Development within the Assessment Parcel would bring settlement closer to the southern edge of the AONB, likely resulting in an adverse effect on the wider landscape setting to the AONB without mitigation. Locating new housing to the south of Hay Wood would lessen that effect by maintaining open space between the AONB and proposed development and reducing intervisibility.</p> <p>Woodland and hedgerows, and the sense of tranquillity within the AONB, which contribute to the special qualities of the designated landscape, would be unaltered.</p>	<p>Hay wood is identified for retention and should be protected and enhanced. Other existing landscape features, including the hedgerows and trees along field boundaries, should be protected and enhanced wherever possible. A combination of bolstered field boundary and new structural planting could form the framework for new housing and a robust northern edge to development, which would further reduce any adverse effects on the AONB.</p> <p>Planting along the eastern edge of the Assessment Parcel, within the vicinity of a former field boundary at the top of the north-east facing slope, would enhance the local network of interconnected green infrastructure and obscure views of the new housing over time to reduce adverse visual effects on peoples views from public footpath 40 (see photomontage 5). There is also potential for new planting to complement and extend Hay Wood.</p> <p>These measures are likely to substantively reduce the potential effects of the proposed allocation.</p>

Table 14: Outline Assessment of Potential Effects: Parcel E - Gaddesden Lane Southern Slopes

<p>POTENTIAL LANDSCAPE EFFECTS (Assuming no mitigation)</p>	<p>POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF VISIBILITY (Assuming no mitigation)</p>	<p>POTENTIAL EFFECTS ON THE AONB (Assuming no mitigation)</p>	<p>POTENTIAL TO AVOID OR REDUCE ADVERSE EFFECTS (Assuming with mitigation)</p>
<p>The valley is an identifiable feature in the local landscape, substantive built form on one side of the valley would have an adverse effect on the landscape character of the valley as a whole.</p> <p>It is recommended that development on the north-east facing slopes which form the assessment parcel should therefore be retained as open space and SANG or farmland. The proposals set out on Figure 13 have no development within this parcel.</p> <p>The proposed development area within the adjoining Assessment Parcel D, is set behind a row of pylons, which are an existing detracting feature in the area. These pylons marginally reduce the susceptibility of Assessment Parcel E to the type of development proposed.</p> <p>With no substantive built development envisaged for this Assessment Parcel, it is expected that the magnitude and significance of landscape effects would be relatively limited, subject to detailed design and assessment.</p>	<p>Close range views of development within the adjoining Assessment Parcel D would be relatively limited given that there are few existing internal public vantage points.</p> <p>Views are contained along the bottom of the valley, however there are more expansive views of the Assessment Parcel from the opposite valley side and from high ground to the east, including along public footpath 40 (see photomontages 5 and 6), and from the southern end of Green Lane adjacent to the AONB.</p> <p>Slopes within the Assessment Parcel are more contained in views from the south due to the north-east facing aspect of the valley side and intervening vegetation and vegetation on the plateau.</p> <p>Given views from the north, it is envisaged that there would be no substantive built development within this Assessment Parcel, thereby limiting visual effect on both internal and more distant views, subject to detailed assessment.</p>	<p>The northernmost corner of the Assessment Parcel meets a corner of the AONB along Gaddesden Lane within the valley bottom.</p> <p>The valley side faces north towards the AONB and there are relatively close range views of the north facing landform from Green Lane along the edge of the AONB. However, it is envisaged that any development within this Assessment Parcel would be restricted to open space or SANG, thereby limiting adverse effects on the AONB.</p> <p>Woodland and hedgerows, and the sense of tranquillity within the AONB, which contribute to the special qualities of the designated landscape, would be unaltered.</p>	<p>Given the nature of views from the opposite side of the valley, the Assessment Parcel has no proposed development within it and would remain within the Green Belt.</p> <p>Maintaining the slopes as open space, SANG or retained farmland, with enhanced landscape structure along field boundaries in a way that is in keeping with the existing landscape character, would be beneficial.</p> <p>Additional characteristic planting on the higher ground to the south-west of the parcel would assist in reducing potential predicted adverse effects of proposed development within adjoining Assessment Parcels to the west and south-west.</p>

Table 15: Outline Assessment of Potential Effects: Parcel F - Revel End Slopes

<p>POTENTIAL LANDSCAPE EFFECTS (Assuming no mitigation)</p>	<p>POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF VISIBILITY (Assuming no mitigation)</p>	<p>POTENTIAL EFFECTS ON THE AONB (Assuming no mitigation)</p>	<p>POTENTIAL TO AVOID OR REDUCE ADVERSE EFFECTS (Assuming with mitigation)</p>
<p>The parcel has a lower sensitivity than other parcels within the study area, which indicates that it is more suitable for development. Without mitigation, development across a large portion of the assessment parcel would lead to a considerable change in the landscape character of the area, from rural fields with limited settlement, to areas of extensive housing and associated infrastructure. Development would adjoin the existing settlement of Hemel Hempstead, although tree cover along Holtsmere End provides a robust soft edge and buffer to the existing countryside.</p> <p>Any development should retain existing significant landscape features such as the hedgerows and trees along field boundaries and roads wherever practical. However, it is likely that some trees and hedges would be lost to facilitate development and associated access, and a considerable area of grade 3 arable fields would be lost.</p> <p>Susceptibility of the Assessment Parcel is reduced by the presence of pylons and roads, and there is no significant woodland and other landscape features are generally unremarkable. Development in this area would likely result in a moderate adverse magnitude of change and overall effect. The exact magnitude and significance of these effects would be subject to detailed design.</p>	<p>Close range views of development would be possible from the public rights of way which cross the Assessment Parcel, with rural views of fields and distant views to rising ground east of the M1 replaced with views of residential development.</p> <p>The local ridge line between Hay Wood and Pancake Wood would primarily obscure views of development from the north, including from the AONB, although there may be limited glimpses of rooftops seen in the distance above intervening vegetation from footpath 40 along the ridge to the north (see photomontage 5b).</p> <p>From the south, development within the southern portion of the Assessment Parcel would be prominent in the view from along Hemel Hempstead Road and a short length of the Nickey Line (see photomontage 7), and likely glimpsed through gaps in vegetation from public footpath 13 near Woodend Farm. Development would be clearly identifiable in the middle distance from rights of way on rising ground east of the M1, albeit from limited vantage points, although would not skyline and would be seen in context with infrastructure along the M1 in the foreground (see photomontage 8). Development would not be perceivable from Redbourn. From further afield to the east, development would be distant, set within a treed context and seen in conjunction with existing development of Redbourn.</p> <p>Given the sensitivity of footpath users and the large number of motorists along Hemel Hempstead Road, development within this Assessment Parcel would initially likely have a high adverse visual effect on both internal and more distant views initially, subject to detailed assessment.</p>	<p>The area has limited relationship to the AONB, primarily due to the local ridge line between Hay Wood and Pancake Wood to the north of the Assessment Parcel. It is envisaged that development of the area west of the pylons would not have a noticeably adverse effect on the general southern setting of the AONB.</p>	<p>Restricting development to west of the pylons and/or setting houses back from Hemel Hempstead Road would assist in maintaining a sense of separation between Hemel Hempstead and Redbourn as experienced along the road. Trees along Holtsmere End Lane should be protected and retained.</p> <p>Development blocks should respect existing field patterns wherever possible to enable the existing network of hedgerows and trees along boundaries to be retained. It is recommended that any future masterplanning should incorporate structural planting on the high ground within the parcel in order to soften views of the proposals in the long term.</p> <p>Hedgerows along field boundaries and roads, such as along Hemel Hempstead Road, should be bolstered and gaps filled to enhance the local network of green infrastructure and help soften built form. Over time, proposed planting including woodland blocks would more than compensate for any initial lost of landscape features.</p> <p>It is considered that new planting has the potential to offset the loss of existing landscape features and reduce the visual effects of the proposals, particularly from the wider landscape.</p>

Table 16: Outline Assessment of Potential Effects: Parcel G - Upper Vea Valley

<p>POTENTIAL LANDSCAPE EFFECTS (Assuming no mitigation)</p>	<p>POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF VISIBILITY (Assuming no mitigation)</p>	<p>POTENTIAL EFFECTS ON THE AONB (Assuming no mitigation)</p>	<p>POTENTIAL TO AVOID OR REDUCE ADVERSE EFFECTS (Assuming with mitigation)</p>
<p>It is envisaged that there would be no substantive development within Assessment Parcel G. Built development is also unlikely within Assessment Parcel E which adjoins to the east, and it is envisaged that any potential development in Assessment Parcel F would be limited to the west of the pylons. Therefore any effect on the landscape character of Assessment Parcel G, including the immediate setting to The Aubreys scheduled monument would be limited.</p> <p>Landscape features such as Pancake Wood, the substantial trees around the perimeter of The Aubreys Fort, boundary hedges and trees and field trees would be retained. The two fields classified as grade 3 agricultural land would also likely be retained.</p> <p>The overall landscape effect would likely be negligible, however there is opportunity to enhance landscape features such as filling gaps in the hedgerow network, including along the north side of Hemel Hempstead Road.</p>	<p>With no development envisaged within or adjacent to the Assessment Parcel, discernible views of built development from public footpath 9, which runs through the Assessment Parcel, are unlikely due to surrounding tree cover.</p> <p>Views of the Assessment Parcel experienced from external vantage points, such as from public footpath 12 beyond the M1 to the east, includes existing dispersed low density settlement and other urban influences within the parcel. Distance views towards built development on higher ground within Assessment Parcel F to the west, would be seen in context with structures within parcel G.</p>	<p>The Assessment parcel is relatively distant from the AONB, already contains low density development and with no significant development envisaged, there would be no adverse effect on the wider setting to the AONB.</p>	<p>No development is envisaged within the assessment parcel limiting the need for mitigation.</p> <p>There is the opportunity to enhance landscape features such as filling gaps in the hedgerow network, including along the north side of Hemel Hempstead Road, in order to offset effects of development within the wider area or create localised enhancements.</p>

Table 17

Outline Assessment of Potential Effects: Potential Development as a Whole

<p>POTENTIAL LANDSCAPE EFFECTS (Assuming no mitigation)</p>	<p>POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF VISIBILITY (Assuming no mitigation)</p>	<p>POTENTIAL EFFECTS ON THE AONB (Assuming no mitigation)</p>	<p>POTENTIAL TO AVOID OR REDUCE ADVERSE EFFECTS (Assuming with mitigation)</p>
<p>The proposed development area is concentrated within areas of identified lower sensitivity adjacent to the existing settlement of Hemel Hempstead, in order to reduce predicted landscape and visual effects. Parcels judged to have a higher sensitivity have been kept free of development or have limited proposed development associated with the main body of the proposed settlement extension. An area of open space is retained to the north, maintaining the immediate setting to the Chilterns National Landscape (AONB).</p> <p>There would be a loss of grade 3 agricultural land across the study area wherever built and open space were to occur, and without mitigation, there would be considerable change in the landscape character of the area, from rural fields to residential development.</p> <p>There is likely to be the loss of some boundary vegetation and mature trees, however existing landscape structure, in particular the small blocks of ancient woodland and mature hedgerows are proposed for retention and should be integrated into the framework of the development.</p> <p>Without mitigation, the development as whole would likely have a notably adverse landscape effect, however there is the opportunity for a comprehensive landscape strategy intrinsic to the proposals to limit adverse effects, and enhance areas where there is currently a paucity of landscape structure.</p>	<p>The proposed development area has been chosen to fit in with existing woodland and structural planting in order to reduce visibility from the wider rural landscape.</p> <p>The greatest effect on views is likely to be internally, where development would alter views such that new built form would dominate the view from a number of public rights of way within the study area, having an adverse effect on the views experienced by walkers.</p> <p>Views of potential development would be partially contained by tree cover along the edge of the AONB and landform to the north, and existing settlement to the south. Without mitigation there would be views of built development at close range from the southern edge of the AONB, seen through gaps in intervening boundary vegetation.</p> <p>From the east and west views of development would generally be seen at greater distance and in context with existing settlement.</p> <p>Given the intervening elevated M1 corridor and tree cover, development within the study area would be obscured in views from Redbourn.</p>	<p>There would be no direct effects on the Chilterns National Landscape (AONB) and the immediate setting to the AONB would be retained as open space.</p> <p>The baseline section of this report identifies that the area of the Chilterns associated with the study area, contains few of the special qualities for which the Chilterns is designated. While this does not diminish the importance of the designation, it does indicate that the special qualities of the Chilterns, including the panoramic views from the escarpment, the dramatic chalk escarpment itself, chalk streams, common land, rights of way and ancient routeways, are unlikely to be adversely affected by the proposed allocation.</p> <p>Development within the study area would bring the edge of settlement closer to the southern edge of the AONB and could initially have an adverse effect on the general southern setting to the AONB. However tree cover, in particular the small areas of ancient woodland, and boundary vegetation are proposed for retention, which would reduce the predicted visual effects on the AONB.</p>	<p>A comprehensive landscape strategy of retained and enhanced landscape structure would help assimilate development into the landscape and reduce effects on the AONB. Considerable new tree and hedgerow planting proposed as part of the development / SANG creation would be in keeping with the special qualities of the AONB which include a high concentration of woodland and frequent hedgerows. Planting, including new woodland, and a buffer of open space would help maintain the tranquillity of the AONB.</p> <p>A network of retained, enhanced and new woodland, trees and hedgerows in keeping with the local landscape character could limit visual effects, particularly where development would be seen in rural views and on the skyline, such as from the west across the Gade Valley.</p> <p>New landscape structure could considerably enhance the green infrastructure of the area and would likely more than compensate for initial landscape feature losses.</p>

Table 18

Assessment of Potential Development Against the Purposes of the Green Belt

<p>PURPOSE 1</p> <p>To check the unrestrained sprawl of large built-up areas</p>	<p>PURPOSE 2</p> <p>To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another</p>	<p>PURPOSE 3</p> <p>To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment</p>	<p>PURPOSE 4</p> <p>To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns</p>
<p>The proposed allocation represents a sustainable urban extension to Hemel Hempstead. While it does expand the settlement, it does so in a planned way, which accords with the existing settlement pattern of the town.</p> <p>The proposed allocation is not considered to represent unconstrained sprawl. The location of the Chilterns AONB and the proposal to create new SANG areas within the retained areas of Green Belt to the north, east and west of the allocation (the land to the south abuts the existing settlement edge), would assist in checking the future potential sprawl of Hemel Hempstead.</p>	<p>The proposed development area would move closer to Redbourn than the existing edge of Hemel Hempstead, however a large area of open land would be retained between the two settlements. The motorway is a strong containing feature for Redbourn.</p> <p>Within the allocation, the proposals would largely be contained behind a local ridgeline. Additional structural planting is proposed at the edge of development / along the proposed Green Belt boundary.</p> <p>The physical and visual separation between Hemel Hempstead and Redbourn would be maintained.</p>	<p>The proposed allocation would be a green field development, which would have consequences for the openness of the countryside within the proposed development area.</p> <p>The proposed Green Belt boundary has been drawn such that open and rural Green Belt land would be retained to the north, east and west of the proposed development. The landscape sensitivity work undertaken within earlier sections of this report has influenced the location of the proposed development, and the most sensitive local character areas have been protected from development.</p> <p>The proposal to create new SANG areas within the retained areas of Green Belt to the north, east and west of the allocation, would assist in protecting the retained countryside from further encroachment in the future.</p> <p>Mitigation measures are proposed in the form of structural planting, which would tie in with the existing landscape framework running through and surrounding the proposed allocation. This would assist in assimilating the development into the wider landscape and protecting the rural character of the retained Green Belt land outside the proposed Green Belt boundary.</p>	<p>The study area does not contribute to the setting of historic towns. There would be no adverse effect on this purpose of the Green Belt.</p>

10 CONCLUSIONS

- 10.1 The study area sits within an undulating landscape with a strong existing landscape framework. Woodland and tree belts are characteristic of the wider landscape, which provides opportunity for successful mitigation strategies that could assimilate a settlement into the wider landscape over time. This would reflect the existing approach to the settlement edge of Hemel Hempstead.
- 10.2 Sub-dividing the study area into seven 'Assessment Parcels' based on local variations in landscape character, has allowed a finer grain assessment of the landscape than previous studies pertaining to the area, but at an appropriate level of detail for this strategic scale study. Consideration of the baseline conditions against criteria set out by the Landscape Institute and Natural England, has then identified the relative landscape sensitivity of each Assessment Parcel, ranging from 'Medium' sensitivity across the central and eastern parts of the study area (Parcels B, C, F and G), to 'High-Medium' sensitivity to the north (Parcels D and E), and 'High' sensitivity of the Gade eastern slopes (Parcel A).
- 10.3 A combination of iterative wireframe testing, consideration of previous studies, baseline conditions and the sensitivity assessment has enabled establishment of a potential development extent and landscape strategy, which aims to limit adverse effects on landscape character, landscape features and views, to an acceptable level for the scale of development envisaged, and over time would enhance landscape structure of the area in keeping with the character of the nearby Chilterns National Landscape (AONB).
- 10.4 Given their higher level of landscape sensitivity to development, it is recommended that built form should be avoided on the Gade Valley Eastern Slopes (Parcel A) and the Gaddesden Lane Southern Slopes (Parcel E), and development should be kept to south of Hay Wood on the Holtsmere Plateau (Parcel D). Given its location and existing mixture of development, it is envisaged that the potential development extent would not extend into the Upper Veal Valley (Parcel G).
- 10.5 Development within the Lovetts End Ridges and Valleys (Parcel B) should be set back from the AONB, with a belt of open space maintained between potential built form and the AONB. Development within the Woodhall Valley (Parcel C) should avoid the valley floor, while the extent of development within the Revel End Slopes (Parcel F) should avoid weakening the separate identities of Hemel Hempstead and Redbourn and by limiting landscape and visual effects to 'Moderate' adverse, through detailed design development, including a robust mitigation strategy.
- 10.6 The exact magnitude and significance of potential landscape and visual effects would be subject to detailed design and assessment, however initially there is likely to be 'Moderate' adverse effect generally, with some instances of 'High' effect, such as on the views experienced by walkers through the proposed development area. However, the recommended comprehensive landscape strategy of tree planting, including new areas of woodland, tree belts and new and enhanced hedgerow structure, including reinstatement of historic field boundaries, would increasingly reduce adverse landscape and visual effects over time. This would include the potential effects on the setting to the Chilterns National Landscape (AONB). The proposed mitigation would also compensate for initial loss of landscape features at the time of construction, and enhance the landscape structure of the area in the longer term.
- 10.7 The potential development extents would necessitate a change to the Green Belt boundary. The Borough of Dacorum, and St Albans City and District Council, have both undertaken reviews of the Green Belt and have formed the consideration that exceptional circumstances exist in order to consider changing the boundary of the Green Belt as part of their respective local plans. The reasoned justification for this decision is provided within other evidence.

- 10.8 In line with para 147 of the NPPF (regarding Green Belt) the draft allocation is considered to form a sustainable extension to Hemel Hempstead, with the potential to be well-served by public transport. It also accords with paragraph 148 by meeting the requirements for sustainable development and defining clear new boundaries, using physical features, which could be strengthened through additional planting.
- 10.9 The potential for the land at the edges of the allocation to be secured as SANG, would also offer the ability to provide compensatory improvements to the remaining Green Belt (in line with paras 147 and 150 of the NPPF), including an increase in environmental quality, accessibility and recreation potential. A revised boundary would continue to protect the setting to the Chilterns National Landscape (AONB), through the retention of Green Belt land, which could also be secured as SANG, providing meaningful alternatives to the Beechwoods SAC in close proximity to a major urban area, along with compensatory enhancements to the Green Belt.