



Landscape & Visual Update Report
Land at Leigh Foss, Radford Semele
Monday 17th August 2020

13415/R01a/RH





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1 Background and Introduction

Background

- 1.1 Tyler Grange Group Limited have been appointed by the landowner Mike Jarrett to prepare an update report on Landscape and Visual matters relating to land at Leigh Foss situated off The Valley, Radford Semele, Warwickshire (the site). The report has been undertaken to support representations being made to the Radford Semele Regulation 16 Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan (the Neighbourhood Plan).
- 1.2 In February 2017, Tyler Grange prepared a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) to support a planning application for the residential development of the site. A copy of the 2017 LVA is contained at **Appendix 1** of this report.
- 1.3 This document summarises the current baseline landscape and visual conditions that have been informed by fieldwork undertaken in August 2020 and has used this to verify the findings of the 2017 LVA.
- 1.4 The report also given further consideration to the landscape sensitivity of the site through an assessment of landscape value and susceptibility within the local context. This has included a review of the revised 2019 NPPF and NPPG, the Warwick Local Plan landscape evidence base and information contained within the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.5 The Report has had regard to NPPF paragraph 100b, which provides that an area can only be listed as Local Green Space where it is:

“b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquility or richness of its wildlife.”

Plan 1: Site Context and Features (13415/P01)



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2 Landscape and Visual Context

Landscape Character

- 2.1 The 2017 LVA included an assessment of the Landscape Character of the local area and the context within which the site is situated in relation to the settlement. This included reference to the Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines which identify Radford Semele, including the site as being situated within the “Dunsmore” Regional Character Area and the “Plateau Fringe” Local Landscape Type.
- 2.2 The Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines informed Warwick District Council’s landscape evidence base and in turn the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.3 The Plateau Fringe landscape type is recognised as being an intensively farmed landscape where the pattern of large, hedged fields and woods is a key visual element. The open fieldscape emphasises the varied topography of low rounded hills, broad valleys and short, steep slopes.
- 2.4 Contrasting character is provided by pockets of pastoral farmland where the more intact field pattern creates a smaller scale landscape character.
- 2.5 Key characteristics of the area identified by the published character assessment include the following that are of relevance to Radford Semele and the surrounding landscape:
- Undulating topography of low rounded hills and narrow meandering river valleys;
 - Large arable fields;
 - Pockets of permanent pasture and smaller hedged fields, usually associated with more steeply sloping ground; and
 - A nucleated settlement patterns.
- 2.6 The landscape is recognised by the Warwickshire Guidelines as being in decline.
- 2.7 As set-out in the LVA, the landscape strategy and guidelines for the Plateau Fringe landscape includes for the conservation and enhancement of tree cover within and around settlements, with recommendations to soften hard built edges through increased tree planting within and around new development.

Site-Specific Character and Features

- 2.8 The LVA provides a description of the site and surrounding landscape character which recognises the situation of the site on the settlement edge, bound by residential properties to the north, west and southern boundaries and enclosed along the eastern boundary by mature hedgerow and trees.
- 2.9 The landscape baseline conditions have not fundamentally changed since the LVA was undertaken in 2017. A summary of the context, character and features associated with the site and its situation in relation to the settlement and wider landscape context is set-out below and illustrated on **Plan 1: Site Context and Features**.

Permissive Path

- 2.10 A permissive path runs along the northern boundary of the site between The Valley and Public Footpath W123b to the east. As illustrated on the photographs below, the path is fenced off from the site. As indicated by signage on the field access gateway, there is no public access granted to the site.



Field Access Gate off The Valley



Looking west along permissive path



Looking east along permissive path

2 Landscape and Visual Context

Site Context

- 2.11 The site comprises a small field managed as grassland on gently sloping land that falls to the northwest along The Valley. A ditch runs along the northern boundary, beyond which properties on St Nicholas Road the back onto the site. The settlement extends on rising land to the north.
- 2.12 To the east and south the landscape is characterised by open rolling arable fields divided by native hedgerows and small areas of deciduous woodland that is typical of the Dunsmore Plateau Fringe landscape. Crown Hill rises to the south, beyond woodland that bounds Tinker's Close.
- 2.13 As illustrated on the aerial images on Plan 1: Site Context and Features, the site is strongly influenced by the adjacent residential properties that bound the site to the north, west and south at St Nicholas Road, The Valley and Tinker's Close respectively.
- 2.14 The properties of St Nicholas Road are situated on rising ground beyond the ditch to the northern boundary, forming a defined edge and prominent development adjacent to the site beyond open, sloping gardens.
- 2.15 Properties on The Valley bound the site to the west. Buildings at Hill Farm on the rising land beyond form a backdrop beyond.
- 2.16 The above is illustrated on the photographs below taken from the permissive path to the northern boundary:

- 2.17 In addition to the residential property at Tinker's Close, the land to the south of the site is managed as paddocks for horse grazing, with associated stables and outbuildings. This places the site within a peri-urban context at the settlement edge.
- 2.18 As explored further below in relation to the Visual Context, the site is well contained in the landscape and relates to the settlement and built edge of Radford Semele. The situation of the site adjacent to and bounded by residential development on the lower-lying land that slopes towards The Valley combines with its containment by mature vegetation to the eastern boundary and woodland and trees to field boundaries to the southeast to provide physical and visual separation from the contrasting open, rolling arable fieldscape surrounding the settlement.

Visual Context

- 2.19 Tyler Grange have undertaken a site visit in August 2020 to establish the landscape and visual baseline. This has included re-taking the photoviews included in the 2017 LVA, as well as identifying any additional representative views that may be of relevance.
- 2.20 As set-out in the LVA, the site is well contained in the local landscape, with public views obtained from Rights of Way, Permissive Paths and roads limited to those within 500m of the site.
- 2.21 **Plan 2: LVA Photoviewpoint Locations** show the

representative viewpoints included in the LVA. The updated August 2020 views from these locations are illustrated on the Updated LVA Photoviewpoint Sheets.

- 2.22 The LVA concluded that beyond views obtained from the permissive path that runs alongside the northern boundary and properties that bound and overlook the site, views into the site are heavily filtered by existing vegetation to the eastern site boundary and built development.
- 2.23 Local views from public rights of way adjacent to the site are filtered by the boundary vegetation and trees and woodland, with glimpsed views into the site from The Valley at the site entrance, as well as between intervening trees from footpaths on the rising land to the west, north of Hill Farm. In these views the site is seen in context with the existing built form adjacent to the site and within Radford Semele.
- 2.24 In views from public footpaths to the east across the open arable fieldscape, the site is partially screened by the intervening landform and situation of the site on the lower lying, sloping land. The built edge of Radford Semele fronting the countryside to the east forms a distinct built edge fronting the arable fields, with the site filtered by boundary vegetation and experienced within the context of the settlement edge, including development to the west at The Valley and Hill Farm and on rising land at Tinker's Close to the south.
- 2.25 The LVA also recognises that there are fleeting, glimpsed views towards the site from the A425 when travelling west. As with



Taken from permissive path to the northern boundary



Views from fenced permissive path, looking west across the site

2 Landscape and Visual Context

views from public footpath W122c to the northeast, the site is viewed in context with the existing development on the eastern edge of the settlement and screened by boundary vegetation in these views.

Findings of Update Field Survey

- 2.26 The fieldwork has verified that the visual context of the site has not fundamentally altered since the 2017 LVA was undertaken.
- 2.27 The LVA was prepared during the winter months when the trees and hedgerows were out of leaf, representing the maximum intervisibility of the site within the local landscape. Whilst the update views have been taken in the summer when the trees are in leaf, given the nature the views and containment of the site within the local topography and screening built form and woodland cover there is little difference in the extent of visibility of site between the winter and summer.
- 2.28 During the winter months, the built edge of the settlement is more pronounced due to the more limited screening and filtering by intervening vegetation. Conversely, the vegetation bounding the site provides greater containment both of the site and existing development in the summer months. However, the composition of the views and elements within them remain largely the same.

Additional Viewpoints

- 2.29 During the fieldwork, three additional viewpoints have been identified. These respond to changes in the vegetation and seasonal variations in vegetative cover between the LVA and 2020 update work. The Views are described and illustrated below. The viewpoint locations are illustrated on **Plan 2**, reference Viewpoints A – C.

Plan 2: LVA Photoviewpoint Location Plan (13415/P02)



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2 Landscape and Visual Context

Additional Viewpoint A: Views from the East

- 2.30 An additional glimpsed view towards the site from public footpath W122c to the east of the site was taken which demonstrates the containment the site beyond the rolling topography in the foreground. This is illustrated on the photograph below, which also demonstrates how the site is viewed in relation to houses on the eastern edge of the settlement on the rising land to the north of the site. The roofs of properties on The Valley form a backdrop to the site, with the property and buildings at Tinker's Close on the skyline to the south.

Additional Viewpoint B: Views from the Southeast

- 2.31 It was noted that some of the hedgerows to field boundaries have been allowed to grow taller, limiting views from footpaths to the southwest (Viewpoint 6). However, there are gappy sections of hedgerow that still allow glimpsed views towards the site from these locations, as illustrated by the photograph below. In these views, the site is situated on the lower ground, with views limited by the intervening topography and mature boundary vegetation. The settlement edge and properties on the higher ground to the north form a developed backdrop and context.

Additional Viewpoint C: Views Adjacent to the Site

- 2.32 Finally, in close-up views from public footpath W123b that runs to the east of the site, the boundary vegetation has matured, limiting views into the site. The screening is also greater than when the LVA views were taken in the winter.
- 2.33 However, there are views into the site from adjacent to the pond northeast of the site. As illustrated by the photograph below, in these views the site is experienced within the context of the existing settlement edge and properties to the northern and western boundaries, as well as the buildings at Hill Farm on the skyline beyond. This reinforces the relationship that the site has with the settlement and its separation from the open arable landscape to the south and east of Radford Semele.



Additional Viewpoint A: View towards the site from public footpath W122c to the east



Additional Viewpoint B: View towards the site from public footpath W122c to the south east



Additional Viewpoint C: View from public footpath W123b to the northeast of the site

2 Landscape and Visual Context



Photoviewpoint 1: Facing east from the Permissive Path at the northwestern site boundary

Orientation: West **Distance from site:** 0m

Description/ Commentary: This viewpoint represents a local view from the northern site boundary, and illustrates the view east into the site from the existing Permissive Path right of way. The view shows the rising landform of the site area and the existing vegetation of the eastern and southern site boundaries. The existing ditch that runs between the Permissive Path and boundaries of property on St. Nicholas Road can be seen in the left of the image.



Photoviewpoint 2: Facing west from the Permissive Path at the northeastern site boundary

Orientation: East **Distance from site:** 0m

Description/ Commentary: This viewpoint represents a local view from the northern site boundary, and illustrates the view west into the site from the existing Permissive Path right of way. The middle-distance of the view shows the properties along The Valley that align the eastern site boundary; beyond this the landform rising up to Hill Farm can be seen.



Photoviewpoint 3: Facing west from Footpath W123b as it runs parallel to the eastern site boundary

Orientation: East **Distance from site:** 5m

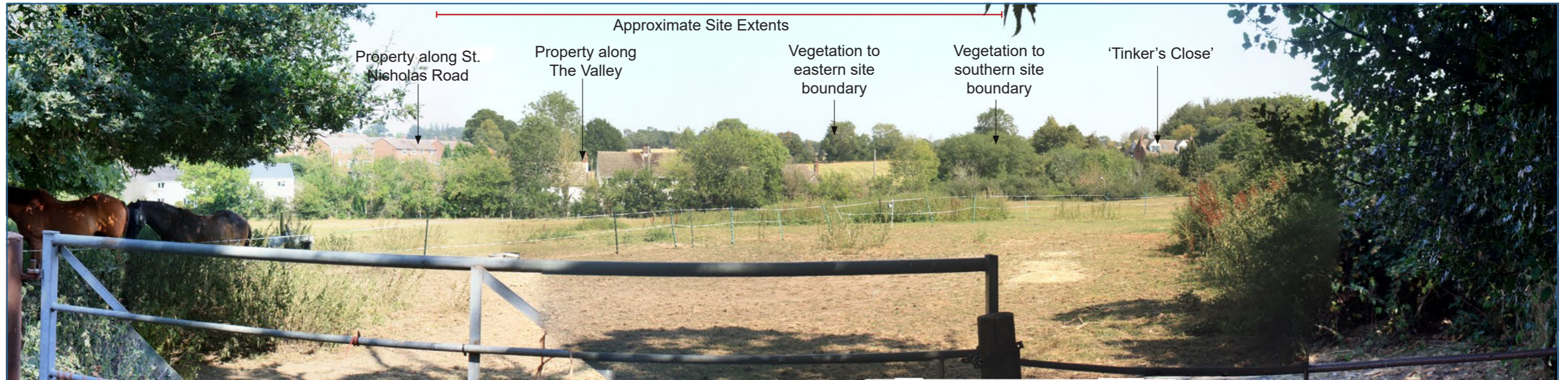
Description/ Commentary: Taken from Public Footpath W123b, at the junction with the Permissive Path, as it passes outside the eastern site boundary. Glimpsed views into the site are available through the existing native hedgerow, and these extend across the site towards Hill Farm and the properties found along The Valley.



Photoviewpoint 4: Facing east from the Permissive Path, at its junction with The Valley

Orientation: West **Distance from site:** 5m

Description/ Commentary: This viewpoint illustrates the existing access to the development land, and shows the relationship with the existing properties along the Valley. The rising topography of the site means views east from here are limited to the vegetation that forms the eastern site boundary.



Photoviewpoint 5: Facing east from Footpath W120 as it approaches Hill Farm

Orientation: West **Distance from site:** 150m

Description/ Commentary: The view west towards the site, as experienced by users of Public Footpath W120 and visitors/workers travelling to Hill Farm. The view shows the undulating local topography, illustrated by the elevated portion of the site visible above the single storey properties along The Valley. This image also illustrates the local context of the site, with properties of St. Nicholas Road seen in the left of the view, and 'Tinker's Close' and the southern site boundary seen to the right.



Photoviewpoint 6: Facing east from Footpath W120b

Orientation: West **Distance from site:** 270m

Description/ Commentary: The local view east towards the site, as experienced by users of Public Footpath W120b. The image illustrates the glimpsed view towards the higher land found towards the south eastern corner of the site, as seen through gaps in the intervening vegetation.



Photoviewpoint 7: Facing southwest from Footpath W123 **Orientation:** North East **Distance from site:** 425m

Description/ This viewpoint is representative of the easternmost extent of the visual envelope, and represents the view towards the site from the Public Footpath that exits the eastern extents of Radford Semele.
Commentary: The existing properties of St. Nicholas Road are visible in the centre of the image, as are the existing properties found along The Valley. The image also illustrates the localised 'valley' of the site location, with the landform rising to Hill Farm beyond.



Photoviewpoint 8: Facing northwest from Footpath W122c **Orientation:** South East **Distance from site:** 425m

Description/ This viewpoint is representative of the southernmost extent of the visual envelope, and represents the view towards Radford Semele and the site from Public Footpath W122c. The 'valley' landform of
Commentary: the proposed development locality means the site is largely screened from view, and although the eastern boundary vegetation can be identified, it is seen within the context of the village edge setting.

3 Landscape Value and Sensitivity

Warwick District Council Landscape Sensitivity Study

Housing Allocations at Radford Semele

3.1 As illustrated on **Figure 1**, land to the northeast of Radford Semele off Southam Road and to the west of the recreation ground has been allocated by the Local Plan for housing (Policy DS7). The land off Southam Road under construction (Bovis Homes – Crownhill Gardens).

Landscape Evidence Base

3.2 The allocation of these sites was supported by the evidence base to the Local Plan, which included the Warwick District Council Landscape Sensitivity and Ecological & Geological Study 2013 and Update 2014 (LSS)

3.3 The LSS places the site within a wider area to the south of the settlement (LCP RS 06) that includes paddocks at Tinker’s Close and woodland and Turkey Pool beyond to the south, Hill Farm and associated fields to the southwest and Valley Farm to the west. The extent of this and other areas assessed around the settlement are illustrated on **Figure 2**.

3.4 As illustrated on **Figure 2**, the majority of LCP RS 06 has been assessed as being of a “High” sensitivity to Housing Development. However, the site and land to the south at Tinker’s Close is assessed as being of a “High / Medium” sensitivity to housing development. The assessment recognises that this area, including the site may accommodate development, stating that:

“There is some scope for very small scale development in the most north-east corner of the zone providing the existing woodland block is extended along the eastern boundary of the zone”.

3.5 This reflects the definition within the LSS that recognises areas of a High/Medium sensitivity can accommodate development in limited situations without significant character change or adverse effects. The assessment also recognises that the zone as a whole is of a low cultural and ecological sensitivity.

3.6 The influence of the settlement edge adjoining site is also recognised in relation to views, tranquillity and the relationship with the wider landscape.

3.7 As illustrated on **Figure 2** below, the other land parcels on the edges of Radford Semele assessed as being of a “High/Medium” sensitivity to housing are those that have been allocated for

development in the Local Plan.

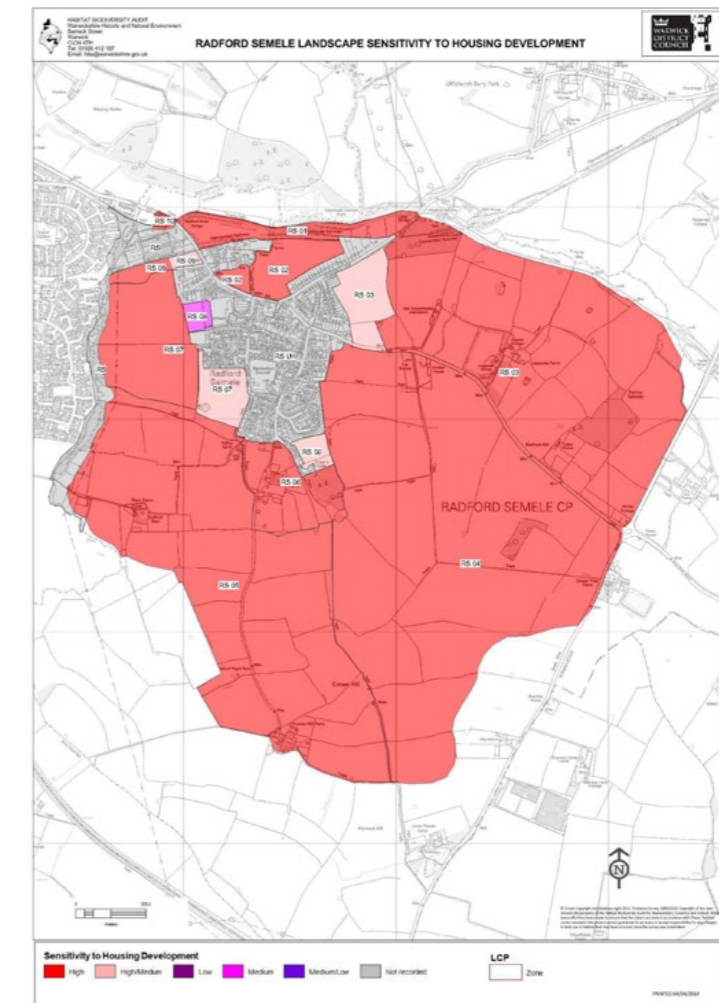
3.8 Considering the above, it is clear that the site is of a lower sensitivity to residential development than other land within and adjacent to the settlement, and has been identified as able to accommodate development that will fit within the existing landscape structure whilst respecting the character, features and valued elements of the wider landscape to the south of Radford Semele and the wider countryside.

3.9 The landscape value and sensitivity of the site to residential development is considered further below at a site-specific level and with reference to the Neighbourhood Plan.

Figure 1: Local Plan Proposals Map extract for Radford Semele below



Figure 2: Radford Semele Landscape Sensitivity to Housing Development Plan



3 Landscape Value and Sensitivity

Landscape Value

- 3.10 When assessing the landscape sensitivity of a site or area, it is necessary to establish both the landscape value and susceptibility of the landscape to the proposed development. The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) published by the Landscape Institute and IEMA define sensitivity as the combining of judgements of the susceptibility of a receptor to a specific type of change and value related to the receptor.
- 3.11 The NPPF requires policies and decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan (paragraph 170).
- 3.12 As identified in the LVA, the site does not lie within or in proximity to a statutorily designated landscape such as a National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. As recognised by the NPPF, these are those of the greatest value that require the highest levels of protection. The site is not within an area recognised for its landscape quality or value at a district-wide level and lies within an undesignated landscape.
- 3.13 As recognised in GLVIA, where local designations are not in use, it is appropriate to draw upon Landscape Character Assessments and associated landscape strategies and guidelines to give an indication of which areas, elements and perceptual aspects of the landscape are particularly valued (GLVIA, paragraph 5.27).
- 3.14 As set-out above, the Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines identify the local landscape as being in “decline” with strategies and guidelines to conserve and enhance tree cover within and around settlements.
- 3.15 The LVA undertook a site-specific assessment using those factors as set-out in Box 5.1 of GLVIA. This is a recognised method for assessing the value to be attributed to the landscape.

Assessment of Landscape Value: GLVIA Box 5.1 Factors

- 3.16 Those factors set-out in GLVIA are as follows:

“Landscape Quality (condition): A measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements;

Scenic Quality: The term used to describe landscapes which appeal to the senses (primarily but not wholly the visual senses);

Rarity: The presence of rare features and elements in the landscape or the presence of a rare Landscape Character Type;

Representativeness: Whether the landscape contains a particular, and/or features and elements, which are considered particularly important examples;

Conservation Interests: The presence of features of wildlife, earth science or archaeological or historical and cultural interest can add to the value of a landscape as well as having value in their own right;

Recreation Value: Evidence that the landscape is valued for recreational activity where experience of the landscape is important;

Perceptual aspects: A landscape may be valued for its perceptual qualities and/or tranquillity;

Associations: Some landscapes are associated with particular people, such as artists or writers, or event in history that contribute to perceptions of natural beauty of the area.”

- 3.17 Using the above definitions, the LVA assessed the site as being of **ordinary value** and **Low-Local Importance**.
- 3.18 This reflects the fact that the site is not recognised through any designations, is representative of the local landscape character and heavily influenced by the adjacent residential development to the site boundaries which influence the landscape quality and perceptual aspects. The limited public access along the permissive path was also highlighted, as well as the lack of any rare features or associations.

Site Specific Landscape Value – Update

- 3.19 Since the undertaking of the 2017 LVA, the draft Neighbourhood Plan has been progressed. The plan has been informed by consultation with the residents of Radford Semele and includes additional information that assists in providing an understanding of those attributes of the landscape that are of particular value to local residents.

Draft Neighbourhood Plan Policy RS6 – Conserving and Enhancing Redford Semele’s Landscape Character

- 3.20 Under Objective 4, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect Local Landscape and Heritage. This objective is supported by Policy RS6. The policy seeks to ensure that new development protects the historic character and settlement pattern, as well as the mosaic of woodland, trees and hedgerows. The policy also seeks to protect the “essential character and quality” of a number of views within the Parish.
- 3.21 The justification to Policy RS6 references the LSS and the focus upon the characteristics of the local landscape.. At paragraph 6.32, the Neighbourhood Plan details the importance placed upon the need to retain key views within Radford Semele and the surrounding countryside by local residents, as evidenced during the consultation. The plan states that:
- “These views are considered important because they reinforce Radford Semele’s identity as a rural village by providing visual connections with the village and the neighbouring countryside.”*
- 3.22 The views identified by Policy RS6 are those considered to be important to the community at large. The plan does however state that Policy RS6 does not preclude development that may impact upon these views but seek s to ensure the essential overall qualities of the open views are protected and retained.
- 3.23 **Plan 3: Neighbourhood Plan Community Value Views** shows the location of three of the views identified by Policy RS6 to the south of Radford Semele. Views from these locations are illustrated on the photosheets for each of the views (Views 6, 7 and 8).
- 3.24 It is important to note that the site is not visible in any of these, or other Community Valued Views identified by Policy RS6. Furthermore, the views do not look towards the site, and seek to protect characteristics, features and qualities that are characteristic of the wider landscape setting of the village and of fields with different character and qualities from those of the site.

3 Landscape Value and Sensitivity

3.25 For example, as set-out at Appendix 3 of the Neighbourhood Plan, **View 6** from the edge of Valley Woods has been selected due to the views of the open countryside which are valued for walks, ecology, farmland and long-distance views. The open views across the arable fieldscape to the south of the settlement are clearly illustrated by the photosheet in this report. These views contrast with the small scale, enclosed views from adjacent to the site which is set amongst properties along the boundaries and set within the extents of adjacent development, contained by mature hedges and trees.

3.26 **View 7** is taken from Valley Rad and comprises filtered, glimpsed views across a field that is described as being a “tranquil meadow bounded by well-developed hedges with many mature oak, horse chestnut and other trees” with popular walks around the outside of the field identified. This contrasts with the character of the site which is strongly influenced by the adjacent residential edge.

3.27 Similarly, View 8 taken from the Trig Point at Crown Hill shows elevated views across the wider landscape and has been selected for its panoramic views that look back towards the village. The site is not visible from the top of the hill, nor from the Public Footpaths leading to and from it as it is situated beyond intervening woodland and on lower lying land.

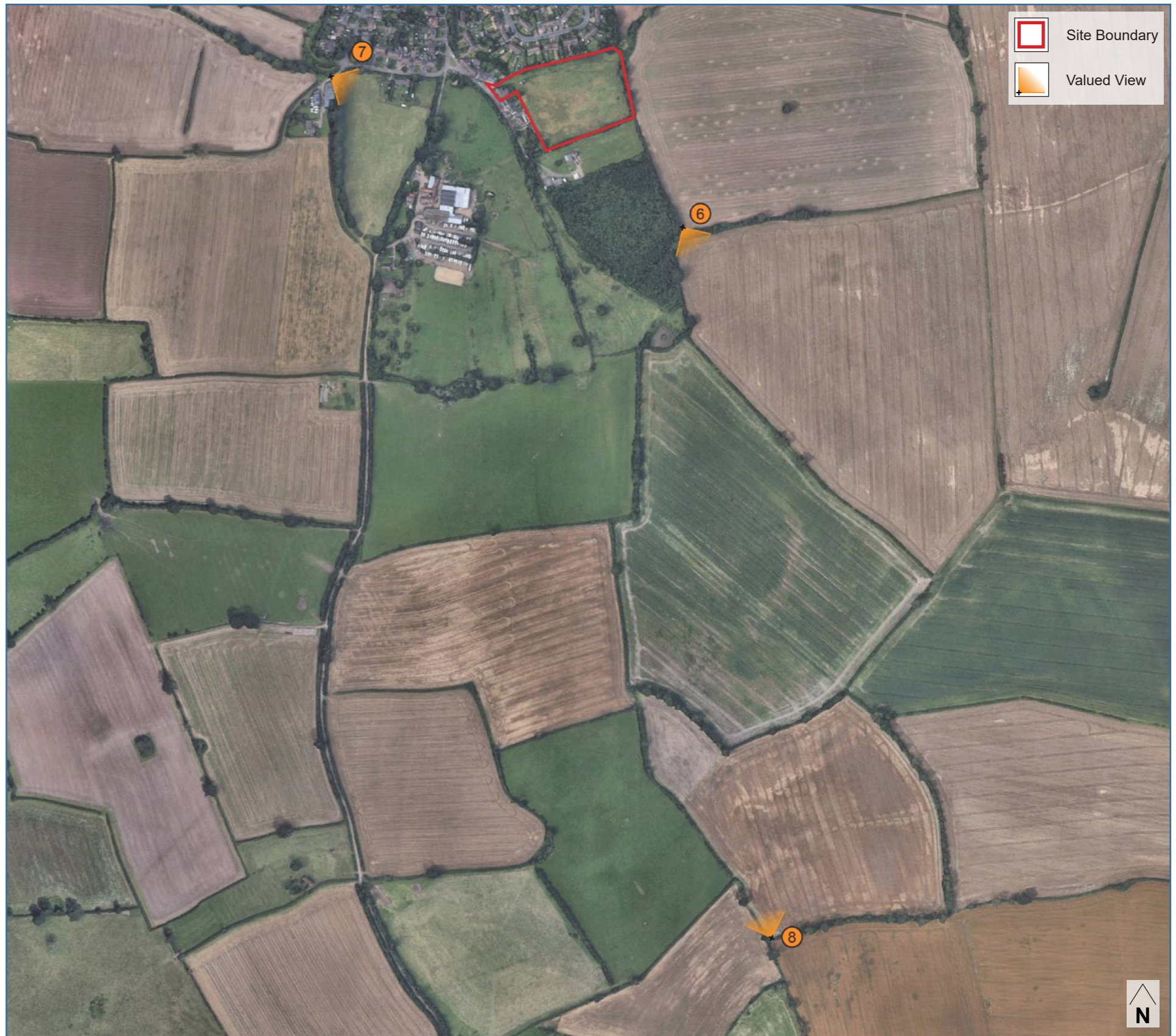
3.28 The analysis above and views from the identified locations demonstrate those views, characteristics and attributes that are valued by the local community. The site does not share the attributes of these, nor does it feature in any of the views identified within the Neighbourhood Plan. This reinforces the assessment within the LVA of the site being ordinary and of limited local value.

Draft Neighbourhood Plan Policy RS2 – Local Green Spaces

3.29 At Appendix 1 of the Neighbourhood Plan, justification for the proposed allocation of the site as a Local Green Space states that:

- It is “used by the community for dog walking and by ramblers to connect with the countryside through a permissive footpath, this beautiful grassy space provides a circular walkway; and
- Being a small field, it evokes the feel of pastures from years gone by with the changing seasons being reflected in the wildflowers which appear along with the changes in the hedgerows. It is a peaceful area.”

Plan 3: Neighbourhood Plan Community Valued Views (13415/P03)



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3 Landscape Value and Sensitivity

3.30 This introduces other landscape value factors that are raised within the Neighbourhood Plan that relate to the recreational value and tranquillity of the site. These are considered below:

Recreation Value

3.31 It is important to note that the site is not publicly accessible and serves no function as a recreational resource. The permissive path that runs alongside the ditch and residential garden is fenced off from the site and serves only to connect The Valley with the Public Right of Way network to the east. The recreational value of the wider landscape and public footpath network is recognised within the Neighbourhood Plan for the popular walks around the local countryside.

3.32 If the site were considered to be of a high recreational or amenity value, then it would be expected that this would have been emphasised within Policy RS6 through inclusion of a Community Valued View from which the site is enjoyed as part of walks and appreciation of the countryside, wildlife and farmland, as set-out within the Neighbourhood Plan.

Tranquillity and Beauty

3.33 When considering landscape value using the GLVIA Box 5.1 criteria, tranquillity is identified as contributing to the perceptual aspects of the landscape. GLVIA defines tranquillity as:

“A state of calm and quietude associated with peace, considered to be a significant asset of landscape”.

3.34 Paragraph 100b of the NPPF states that an area can be listed as a Local Green Space if it is *“b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife.”*

3.35 As described in this report and illustrate on the accompanying aerial images and photographs, the site is strongly influenced by its situation adjacent to development on the edge of Radford Semele that bounds the site to the north, west and south. The enclosure of the site and relationship with the settlement edge, combined with a physical and visual separation from the open, rural character of the wider agricultural landscape. As described above and demonstrated by the Community Value Views 6 and 7 in particular, the open panoramic views across the open agricultural landscape are valued for their tranquillity and beauty.

3.36 As recognised by the Neighbourhood Plan and View 7, the tranquil nature of smaller fields in the settlement edge is afforded by their being bounded by mature hedgerows and numerous trees. The site does not share this attribute and is instead influenced by housing that bounds the site. The site is not a tranquil and beautiful landscape and is of a peri-urban character and context.



Valued View 6:



Valued View 7:



Valued View 8:

4 Conclusions

- 4.1 This report has been prepared by Tyler Grange to provide an update to the Landscape and Visual Appraisal that was prepared in 2017 to support a previous planning application for residential development of land located off The Valley at Leigh Foss, Radford Semele. The update has been informed by fieldwork undertaken in August 2020 and a review of the Warwick District Local Plan landscape evidence base and Draft Regulation 16 Radford Semele Neighbourhood Plan. This has been undertaken to assist in the identification of the landscape sensitivity and value of the site and its suitability for residential development.
- 4.2 A review of the landscape and visual context has identified that the baseline conditions remain largely as they were when the 2017 LVA was prepared. The site is well contained, being bounded on three sides by residential development, including on elevated land to the north on St Nicholas Road. Mature hedgerows and trees to the eastern boundary separate the site from the open arable fields within the wider landscape surrounding Radford Semele. To the south of the site, paddocks, outbuildings and the property of Tinker's Close provide a peri-urban context at the edges of the settlement. Woodland beyond provides containment from the rising land towards Crown Hill.
- 4.3 A permissive path that runs along the northern boundary is fenced off from the remainder of the site, with there being no further public access across or into the site. The permissive path connects The Valley to the west with public footpaths to the east.
- 4.4 Public views towards the site are limited to those within 500m. This is due to the containment by built form to the north and west, situation of the site on lower lying sloping land and woodland to the south and mature hedgerows and trees to the east. In views from within the wider countryside to the east and southeast, views into the site are largely obscured. The site is experienced in context with the defined settlement edge formed by properties adjoining the arable fields to the east of the settlement.
- 4.5 From the west, there are glimpsed views towards the site from public footpaths set amongst existing built development and vegetation. Views across the site are limited to those obtained from the permissive path and adjacent properties overlooking the site.
- 4.6 The Warwick District Landscape Sensitivity Study assessed parcels of land around Radford Semele to determine their sensitivity to accommodate development. The site lies within a discreet parcel of land that was identified as being suitable for limited development, and of a High / medium landscape sensitivity.
- 4.7 Other parcels assessed as being of a High / Medium sensitivity to the northeast and west of the settlement have been allocated for housing development, including the Bovis site off Southam Road (A425) that is being built out. It is therefore clear that the site is one of a limited number of locations on the edge of Radford Semele that has been identified as suitable for development from a landscape and visual perspective.
- 4.8 The Council's Landscape Sensitivity Study recognised the site as lying within an area of low cultural and ecological sensitivity, where the settlement edge also influences views, tranquillity and the relationship with the wider landscape.
- 4.9 The site and settlement of Radford Semele are not situated within or in close proximity to any landscapes that are recognised at a statutory, nation or non-statutory district / local level for their quality or value.
- 4.10 The 2017 LVA undertook a site-specific assessment of the landscape value of the site using a set of landscape value factors identified in GLVIA and identified the site as being Ordinary and of Limited Localised Importance.
- 4.11 A review of the Draft Regulation 16 Neighbourhood Plan has identified that the site does not feature in, facilitate or contribute to Community Valued views in and around Radford Semele that have been recognised as important by the local community through consultation. Those views identified by the Neighbourhood Plan to the south of the settlement are valued for their experience of the wider countryside and rural landscape beyond the settlement. The site does not share these attributes, being contained, small-scale and strongly influenced by the residential edge that bounds the site.
- 4.12 This update report has also considered the tranquillity, beauty and recreation value associated with the site and has demonstrated that it is of limited value in this regard, with access limited to the permissive path and influence of the built edge and peri-urban context and influence of adjacent properties affecting the sense of tranquillity and beauty.
- 4.13 The review of the Local Plan evidence base and site-specific assessment contained within this report has demonstrated that the site is suitable to accommodate residential development, being of a lower landscape sensitivity than other undeveloped land on the edge of Radford Semele. The site is an ordinary field situated on and influenced by the settlement edge, contained within the landscape and of limited, localised importance.

28 February 2017

Land off The Valley,
Radford Semele,
Warwickshire

Landscape and
Visual Appraisal

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10808/P01 February 2017

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Section 1: Introduction

Introduction

- 1.1. Tyler Grange LLP has been instructed by Protech Developments UK Limited to undertake an assessment of the potential landscape and visual effects associated with land off The Valley, Radford Semele, Leamington Spa (hereafter referred to as 'the site'). The LVA considers the key landscape resources and visual issues and the likely effects of potential residential development on-site in relation to the character of the area and views. The site location and surrounding context is shown on **Plan 1** and **Plan 2** respectively.
- 1.2. A planning application was submitted to and refused by Warwickshire District Council (hereafter referred to as the Council) in August 2016. The previous scheme was an Outline planning application for the erection of up to 40 dwellings. Warwickshire District Council's reasons for refusal in relation to landscape and visual matters.

"Policy DP3 of the Warwick District Local Plan 1996-2011 states that development proposals will be expected to demonstrate that they, amongst other requirements, protect and enhance the landscape character of the area. Meanwhile Policy RAP10 states that development will not be permitted that would require major modification to surrounding rural roads in a way that would change the character of rural roads in the vicinity of the proposal. With regard to the Draft Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029, Policy NE4 states that development proposals will be required to demonstrate that they, amongst other requirements, are sensitive to an areas capacity to change and acknowledge cumulative effects.

The proposed development will have an adverse impact on the rural character of the area by introducing large scale built development on a greenfield site. The landscape assessments carried out as part of the Local Plan Review included this site in an area of high-medium landscape sensitivity. The proposed highway improvements to facilitate access to the development will also adversely affect the rural character of The Valley. In addition there are issues with cumulative landscape impact in the context of Radford Semele given the amount of development that has recently been approved around the edges of the village. Therefore, in the opinion of the local planning authority, the proposals would cause unacceptable landscape harm.

The proposals are thereby considered to be contrary to the aforementioned policies."

- 1.3. The proposed scheme and LVA look to address the issues for refusal and provide a development that would comply with policy, protect and enhance the existing landscape setting and not result in unacceptable landscape harm.
- 1.4. This document will undertake the following:
 - Establish a baseline study area through GIS topographical analysis and the production of a Theoretical Zone of Visual Influence (illustrated on **Plan 3** and **Plan 4**);
 - A review of the National and Local Policy context, the surrounding Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network and the policy aspirations of particular relevance to landscape and visual matters (illustrated on **Plan 5**);
 - An analysis of the landscape character of the site, including the role of existing development as features within the local landscape;



- An analysis of the visual context and amenity of local receptors (refer to **Plan 6**);
 - Introduce the principle of development, including describing how the proposals can be implemented in order to respond to their landscape and visual context; and
 - Identify and describe the effects that are likely to occur as a result of development on-site, including whether they are adverse or beneficial, in accordance with Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd edition (GLVIA3)¹.
- 1.5. This report is being prepared to accompany a revised application for the development of land at The Valley. It should be read in conjunction with the previously submitted application, reference W/16/1489 (dated 12 August 2016), and subsequent Refusal letter.

Methodology

- 1.6. The methodology used in drafting this report draws upon the following guidance:
- 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', Landscape Institute (LI) and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), third edition 2013; and
 - 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment', Natural England, 2014.
- 1.7. The LVA incorporates a baseline appraisal to provide an understanding of the landscape in terms of its constituent elements and character, its condition, how it is experienced and the value attached to it. The baseline stage also establishes the area over which the site may be visible and those groups of people who may experience views of the site.
- 1.8. The baseline appraisal process comprises a combination of desk and field studies with subsequent analysis and involves the following:
- A review of landscape designations and planning policies relevant to the study area;
 - An assessment of the landscape character of the site with reference to published landscape character assessments and verified and refined through fieldwork. This includes the classification of the landscape into units of distinct and recognisable character at a site-specific level;
 - Identification of representative viewpoints. The identification of views is carried out from external spaces within the public domain, and not from buildings or private spaces; and
 - Fieldwork to check and verify the findings of the desktop studies and take a photographic record of views for inclusion in the report.
- 1.9. In the first instance GIS and Ordnance Survey Terrain data are modelled to create a topographical plan (refer to **Plan 3: Topography 10808/P03**) and this is followed by the ZTV (refer to **Plan 4: GIS Zone of Theoretical Visibility 10808/P04**). The computer generated ZTV is created using bare earth OS 3D modelling data, and does not take into consideration the screening effect of built form, trees and vegetation and how this may influence the visibility of the site and development upon it. This information provides a starting point for the fieldwork in terms of determining the extent of visibility and the likely receptors.

¹ Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', Landscape Institute (LI) and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) 2013. Known as the GLVIA3

² W/16/1489 Refusal letter', Warwickshire District Council



- 1.10. Typically, representative views of the site from a variety of receptors in the local area are determined on the basis of the first sieve GIS mapping and subsequent fieldwork. The identification of views is carried out from external spaces within the public domain, and not from buildings or private spaces.
- 1.11. Viewpoint locations and the area of study are illustrated on **Plan 6: Photoviewpoint Locations Plan**. The field verified visual envelope shows the approximate extent of areas within the locality from which the site is visible, based upon fieldwork and views available from publicly accessible areas.
- 1.12. In addition, the report considers development opportunities and constraints in respect of landscape and visual matters in order that they guide future development proposals. Any relevant mitigation and enhancement measures which can be delivered to address potentially adverse landscape and visual impacts are considered and a conclusion is drawn as to the likely effects of a future development on-site. The suitability of the proposed development against both National and Local Policy relating to landscape matters is also considered.
- 1.13. In accordance with GLVIA3, the LVA identifies and describes the potential effects that may occur should the site be developed. Unlike a full LVIA, an LVA does not systematically and transparently assess the likely significance of the effects identified (refer to GLVIA table 3.1).
- 1.14. Professional judgment plays an important role in the LVA process where the assessment of landscape character and visual amenity is both a subjective and objective process. However, the appraisal process seeks to provide a narrative to explain the judgements reached.
- 1.15. The assessment of the nature of the effect depends on the degree to which the development:
 - Compliments, respects and fits into the existing scale, landform and pattern of the landscape context and visual composition;
 - Enables enhancement, restoration or retention of the landscape character and visual amenity and delivers policy aspirations; and
 - Affects strategic and important views in addition to the visual context and the experience of the visual receptors.

The Site

- 1.16. The site is situated within the Warwick district of Warwickshire, and is located on the southern periphery of Radford Semele (refer to **Plan 1**). It is approximately 3.2km (2.00 miles) to the east of Leamington Spa Town Centre, and is centred on OS grid reference 434610, 263867.
- 1.17. The site adjoins the existing southern edge of Radford Semele, bounding properties of St Nicholas Road to the north and The Valley to the west. The site currently comprises approximately 1.50 hectares (3.70 acres) of gently sloping land that rises from northwest to southeast (refer to **Plan 3**). The land slopes from a height of approximately 66m AOD at the northwestern corner up to 74m AOD in the southeastern corner. A steep-sided ditch aligns the northern site boundary, and provides a visual and physical separation between the site and the gardens of properties located on St. Nicholas Road.
- 1.18. The site is currently found as unmanaged semi-improved grassland, defined by mature, gappy hedgerows to the east and southern field boundaries, with countryside beyond to the east and south. Timber fences and ornamental planting to the rear of properties bounds the site to the north and west (see Photosheets and further description below).



1.19. The site boundaries and immediate surroundings are as follows:

- To the north – the site is bounded by the residential property boundary, defined by a mixture of boundary fences and ornamental planting. A small watercourse runs within a steep sided ditch adjacent to the boundary, within the site area, and mature, scrubby hedgerow vegetation can be found in individual isolated areas along its length. A permissive path runs along the southern edge of the watercourse, and is separated from the wider site by a post and wire fence. The wider built area and settlement of Radford Semele lies beyond the northern boundary housing on rising landform and overlooks the site.
- To the east – the site is defined by a native hedgerow, with mature deciduous trees scattered along its length, and reinforced by a timber post and rail fence. Public Right of Way (PRoW), footpath W123b runs along the outside of the eastern boundary, beyond which lies a gently rolling landscape of large arable fields broken up by low native hedges with scattered hedgerow tree planting and areas of small wooded copse.
- To the south – the boundary consists of a dense native hedgerow with mature hedgerow trees, beyond which lies the property 'Tinker's Close'. A woodland copse, formed predominantly of Birch species, lies on high ground further to the south, beginning at the Tinker's Close southern border.
- To the west – the site is bound by the outbuildings, six-foot brick walls and a variety of fencing that defines the rear gardens of properties along The Valley, strengthened by domestic ornamental planting. Beyond the properties, the land is divided into small field plots bound by gappy native vegetation, and divided by access tracks and public rights of way footpaths.

1.20. An existing permissive footpath runs adjacent to the brook on the northern boundary, connecting The Valley to PRoW footpath W123b which runs adjacent to the eastern border of the site. The permissive footpath, separated from the wider site area by a post and wire fence, connects Southam Road in the north to PRoW footpath W122c to the south of the site. The permissive footpath is to be retained in the proposed layout. These are both illustrated on **Plan 5: Landscape Planning Context and Public Rights of Way**.

Appraisal Context

1.21. In accordance with the requirements for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), the proposed development is outside the parameters for which an EIA is necessary and therefore the technical aspects of the development have not been considered against an EIA context.



Section 2: Planning Policy Context

The Planning Context

- 2.1. The following text summarises the planning policies relevant to landscape and visual issues and should be read in conjunction with **Plan 5: Landscape Planning Context and Public Rights of Way**. This section is limited to those policies with a primary focus on landscape and visual issues.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)² 2012

- 2.2. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlines the Government's planning policies for England, setting out how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions and any development would need to accord with the following planning provisions.
- 2.3. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF sets out three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. For plan making, this means that local planning authorities: *"should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs for their area"*, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless:
- *"- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
 - *Specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted."* (paragraph 14).
- 2.4. For decision making, development that accords with a current development plan should be approved without delay; and, where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF as a whole.
- 2.5. The NPPF then goes on to list the 12 core planning principles that should underpin both plan-making and decision taking (paragraph 17 of the NPPF). Those of particular relevance to landscape and visual matters include the following:
- *Not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives;*
 - *Seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;*
 - *Take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities;*
 - *Contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution; and*
 - *Encourage the effective use of land by reusing brownfield land.*

² National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012. Published by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

- 2.6. Section 7, Paragraph 58 of the NPPF relates to delivering high quality design. Of relevance to this assessment are the following:
- Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
 - Establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;
 - Respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation; and
 - Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.
- 2.7. Paragraph 60 states the need to promote or reinforce “local distinctiveness”, whilst paragraph 64 adds that “Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions”.
- 2.8. Paragraph 75 considers the importance of public rights of way, stating that *“planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. Local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails”*.
- 2.9. Paragraph 109 states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by *“Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils”*, although no definition of a valued landscape is provided in the NPPF or PPG. Attention is drawn to the difference between international, national and local landscape designations at paragraph 113 with regards to the criteria based policies against which development proposals should be judge, stating that:

“Distinctions should be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites, so that protection is commensurate with their status and gives appropriate weight to their importance and the contribution that they make to wider ecological network”.

Planning Policy Guidance

- 2.10. On 6th March 2014, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) launched a web-based resource of Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) which links with policies of the NPPF.
- 2.11. Addressing the topic of ‘Design’, the guidance emphasises the need for development to be integrated with its surrounding context in order to ensure that it integrates into the wider area, reinforces local distinctiveness, reduces impacts on nature and sense of place, and considers views into and out of sites. This includes the use of local building forms to ensure that development reflects the layout, scale, pattern and materials within new development. At paragraph 007 Reference ID: 26-007-20140306, it states:
- “Planning should promote local character (including landscape setting). Development should seek to promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development, local man-made and natural heritage and culture, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation”*.
- 2.12. The use of high quality hard and soft landscape design to help successfully integrate development into the wider environment is also emphasised as being important to consider from the outset, in order to ensure proposals, improve the overall quality of the townscape and landscape.



Local Policy

- 2.13. The site lies within the administrative area of Warwickshire District Council. The council is currently preparing a New Local Plan for Warwick District, and this has now passed through the Examination Hearing process with consultation closed on 22nd April 2016.
- 2.14. This report, and the development to which it relates, has been considered against policy from both the proposed Local Plan and the existing plan which is due to be replaced.

New Local Plan (2011-2029) Policy

- 2.15. Policies within the Adopted Local Plan of relevance in terms of the consideration of design, environmental impact, landscape character and visual amenity are summarised below and shown on **Plan 5**:

Policy NE4 – Landscape

- 2.16. The policy looks to ensure that all new development positively contributes to landscape character. Its purpose is to ensure that significant landscape features are protected from harm and that landscape design is a key component in the design of new development. In particular, it states that development proposals will be required to demonstrate - amongst others - that they:
- *“a) Integrate landscape planning into the design of development at an early stage;*
 - *b) Consider its landscape context, including the local distinctiveness of the different natural and historic landscapes and character, including tranquillity;*
 - *c) Relate well to local topography and built form and enhance key landscape features, ensuring their long-term management and maintenance;*
 - *d) Identify likely visual impacts on the local landscape and townscape and its immediate setting and undertakes appropriate landscaping to reduce these impacts;*
 - *e) Aim to either conserve, enhance or restore important landscape features in accordance with the latest local and national guidance;*
 - *f) Avoid detrimental effects on features which make a significant contribution to the character, history and setting of an asset, settlement, or area; and*
 - *g) Address the importance of habitat biodiversity features, including aged and veteran trees, woodland and hedges and their contribution to landscape character, where possible enhancing these features through means such as buffering and reconnecting fragmented areas.*
- 2.17. Regard to the Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines is to be used when applying Policy NE4. Full consideration of the Guidelines and the effect the development may have on local landscape character have been reviewed as part of this Landscape Visual Appraisal and can be found within the baseline landscape appraisal in Section 3, Landscape Character.

Policy BE1 – Layout and Design

- 2.18. The objective of this policy is to achieve good layout and design for all new development. It states that *“New development will be permitted where it positively contributes to the character and quality*



of its environment through good layout and design.” Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate, amongst others, that they:

- *“Harmonise with, or enhance, the existing settlement in terms of physical form, patterns of movement and land use;*
- *Relate well to local topography and landscape features; (see policy NE4);*
- *Reinforce or enhance the established urban character of streets, squares and other spaces;*
- *Reflect, respect and reinforce local architectural and historical distinctiveness;*
- *Enhance and incorporate important existing features into the development;*
- *Respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing;*
- *Provide for convenient, safe and integrated cycling and walking routes within the site and linking to related routes and for public transport; (see policy TR1);*
- *Provide adequate public and private open space for the development in terms of both quantity and quality; (see policy HS4); and,*
- *Ensure all components, e.g. buildings, landscaping, access routes, parking and open spaces are well related to each other and provide a safe and attractive environment.”*

Overarching Policy SC0 – Sustainable Communities

2.19. The policy states that *“New development should be high quality...”* and that it should protect and enhance the historic, built and natural features of the District. To achieve this the development, amongst others, should:

- *Deliver high quality layout and design to integrate with existing communities; and,*
- *Protect, and where possible enhance, the natural environment including important landscapes, natural features and areas of biodiversity.*

Local Plan (1996-2011) Policy

2.20. Given the status of the New Local Plan, policies from the existing Local Plan are of a limited weight, but remain as a material consideration when considering planning applications. The following policies are of relevance to landscape issues relating to the potential development of the site:

- Policy DP1 – Layout and Design
- Policy DP3 – Natural and Historic Environment and Landscape
- Policy RAP10 – Directing New Housing

2.21. These policies are similar to the policies considered above from the New Local Plan, including the same restrictions and aspirations relating to development and landscape character and setting of conservation areas.



Landscape Sensitivity and Ecological & Geological Study

- 2.22. This document, produced on behalf of Warwickshire County Council and published in November 2013, looks at the capacity of local landscape parcels to absorb residential and commercial development.
- 2.23. The proposed development is located within parcel '**RS 06**', which is described as having **High – medium** sensitivity to housing development, although the document states:

“There is some scope for very small scale development in the most north-east corner of the zone providing the existing woodland block is extended along the eastern boundary of the zone.”

Designations

- 2.24. Designations relating to the site and within the 2km study area, that are of relevance to landscape and visual matters and the proposed development, include the following:

Public Rights of Way

- 2.25. The Public Rights of Way (PRoW) within the study area are illustrated on **Plan 5**.
- Footpath **W123b** begins approximately 250m north of the site, as a branch from footpath W123, and runs down the eastern periphery of Radford Semele. It passes along the eastern site boundary before meeting footpath W122c approximately 180m south of the site.
 - Bridleway **W122** begins at the end of The Valley, adjacent to 'Tinker's Close' property, and continues towards Crown Hill to the south.
 - Footpath **W122c** begins on the A425, at the eastern settlement edge, and heads due south for approximately 600m. It then turns sharply west, and heads into the wooded copse that is found to the south of 'Tinker's Close' where it meets W122.
 - Footpath **W120** runs from the junction of Valley Road and Lewis Road and heads south, via Hill Farm.
 - Footpath **W120b**, providing a short link between Hill Farm and Valley Farm.
- 2.26. Other routes of note within the local area include the **permissive path** that links The Valley and PRoW W123b, and runs inside the site along the northern boundary.

Listed Buildings

- 2.27. Listed Buildings can be found within the immediate study area of the site and these are shown on **Plan 4**. Consideration of the historic significance of these Buildings as heritage assets is beyond the scope of this report. Within the LVA, consideration of impacts upon Listed Buildings are focussed on the potential effects of the proposed development on the views and visual amenity of residents of the property. Consideration is limited to the potential for change to local character or vernacular in respect of the location of Listed Buildings, and this is discussed further in Section 3, Landscape Character.



Interim Conclusions

- 2.28. A number of policies pertain to landscape and green infrastructure which any development should take into account at the design phase. The presence of the adjoining residential edge and arrangement of existing mature boundary vegetation will require sensitive incorporation.
- 2.29. The site is not subject to any qualitative landscape designations and the northern and western site boundaries are contiguous with the existing settlement edge. On-site scheme proposals must ensure a high quality and characteristic design, utilising materials, scaling, density, layout, siting, character and appearance to respect the site, its surroundings and adjacent residential amenity (Local Policies BE1 and SC0).
- 2.30. The proposals will need to consider the role of the existing landscape features, including trees, hedgerows and woodlands as part of the setting to both the existing and proposed development within the site (Local Policy NE4).
- 2.31. Local Plan Policy NE4 requires development to respond to the landscape character and protect and, where possible enhance features that respond to the local character, regarding the Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines. The assessment contained within this LVA can be used to determine the extent of impact a residential scheme may have upon the character and visual amenity of the local area in the context of adjoining residential built form surrounding the northern, southern and western edges of the site.
- 2.32. The adjoining residential context sets a precedent and backdrop for development at the settlement edge of Radford Semele. This can be referenced on-site, alongside adopted planning policy pertaining to materiality and urban design matters, to ensure the implementation of a high-quality development that responds positively to the adjoining existing settlement.
- 2.33. The proposals will also need to give consideration to the visual amenity of users of local Public Rights of Way; Footpath W123b that borders the site, and all other PRoW within the immediate surroundings as detailed in paragraph 2.26.



Section 3: Landscape Character

- 3.1. With regard to guidance within GLVIA3, NPPF, and local policy context, this section considers the existing landscape character and features as relevant to the site and its environs. In order to establish the degree of change arising from the development of the site, it is important to understand the existing situation and site context in terms of landscape characteristics associated with the local area. The characterisation process is a non-value judgement process; therefore, classifying landscapes into distinct areas does not suggest that one character is more sensitive than another, or valued by people more or less.
- 3.2. The landscape character appraisal process reviews the wider landscape character context at a national level and then explores in more detail character features at a district/local level, before analysing site specific land uses that inform local distinctiveness and sense of place.

National Character Areas (NCAs)

- 3.3. Natural England's 'National Character Assessment' identifies the site as located within the boundary of **NCA 96: Dunsmore and Feldon**.
- 3.4. For the purpose of assessing the effects of development, National Character Areas are relevant for understanding the broad landscape context. Although the site and its surroundings share some of the key characteristics associated with these character areas, the mapping is not of a level of detail sufficient to provide an appreciation of the specific local level landscape character and context issues pertaining to the site itself which need to be taken into account in the development process. Whilst there would be a localised effect following development of the site, there would be no perceptible effect upon the wider National Character Area or any particular features of merit described within the study.

Regional/Local Character

- 3.5. The Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines, published by Warwickshire County Council Planning and Transport Department (November 1993), identifies the site as located within the **Dunsmore** Regional Character Area, and then within the **Plateau Fringe** local landscape type.
- 3.6. The Dunsmore Regional Character Area is identified as an area of low ridges and valleys comprised of an area of former heath. It is further described as showing the following characteristics:
"...a well wooded, and in places urbanised region characterised by low glacial plateaus, sandy soils and remnant heathy vegetation."
- 3.7. The Plateau Fringe landscape type is summarised by the following key characteristics:
 - *"An undulating topography of low rounded hills and narrow meandering river valleys;*
 - *Large arable fields, often with a poorly defined fields pattern;*
 - *Pockets of permanent pasture and smaller hedged fields, usually associated with more steeply sloping ground;*
 - *A nucleated settlement pattern typically comprising loose clusters of dwellings; and,*



- *Isolated, brick built farmsteads.*”
- 3.8. The character of the Dunsmore Plateau Fringe is described as that of a “...rather variable landscape with a varied undulating topography of low rounded hill, broad valleys and short, steep slopes...” It goes on to describe the landscape as “...an intensively farmed landscape with a fragmented or poorly defined field pattern which tends to emphasise the large scale nature of the underlying landform.” Contrasting character is provided by “pockets of pastoral farmland where the generally more intact field pattern creates a smaller scale landscape character.”
- 3.9. The overall strategy and guidelines for Dunsmore provide the framework for conserving and enhancing the character and unity of the region. The Management strategy for Dunsmore is to:
- “Enhance the identity and unity of the landscape by strengthening the wooded heathy character of the region.”*
- and the overall guidelines include recommendation to; “soften hard built edges through increased tree planting within and around new development.”
- 3.10. The overall strategy for the Plateau Fringe landscape type describe the landscape as “...an intensively farmed agricultural landscape where the pattern of large hedged fields and woods is a key visual element.” It goes on to state that the overall pattern of the landscape is one of **decline**, and that the priority for the area should be to “...enhance the structure and unity of the landscape by restoring or strengthening primary linear features...”.
- 3.11. Landscape guidelines for the Plateau Fringe include the following recommendations:
- *“Conserve and restore all primary hedgelines and manage them more positively as landscape features;*
 - *Encourage the development of wide field margins along streamlines and woodland edges;*
 - *Enhance the continuity and wooded character of river and stream corridors; and*
 - *Conserve and enhance tree cover within and around rural settlements.”*

Site Specific Character

- 3.12. Whilst the site lies within and adjacent to character areas and types as defined by the published landscape character assessments summarised above, and shares some of their characteristics, the published assessments do not consider the nature of the site-specific issues and context. Differences in landform, land use, landscape structure, degree of visual enclosure and influence of built development creates variation in landscape character and local distinctiveness. A site-specific review of land uses and characteristics does not involve the application of sensitivity or value, but does assist in exploring the suitability and ability of the landscape to absorb further change, restoration and enhancement in relation to such matters as condition, scale, relationship with other uses and spatial arrangement. A description of the site-specific character is given below, and should be read in conjunction with **Plan 2** and the **Photoviewpoint sheets**.
- 3.13. The site is a small parcel of unmanaged semi-improved grassland located on the edge of the existing built form of Radford Semele, bound on the northern, southern and western sides by residential gardens and their associated ornamental vegetation. Naturalised hedgerows, gappy and punctuated with small trees, align the eastern boundary.



- 3.14. The topography of the site is gently sloping from southeast to northwest, falling from a height of approximately 74m at the south-eastern corner to 66m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) at the north-western corner. A natural ditch runs along the northern boundary, before the landform rises up towards the existing residential development and the wider settlement of Radford to the north.
- 3.15. The site is bound to the east by rolling open countryside. Fields are typically arable farmland and are large, divided by mature native hedges and small areas of deciduous woodland, and create a strong rural character.
- 3.16. Land south of the site, beyond the 'Tinker's Close' property, is comprised of a small Birch coppice. Beyond this lies a landscape of arable fields, framed and divided by native hedgerows and farm tracks.
- 3.17. The landscape rises further south and east, heading towards the local highpoints of Crown Hill to the south and Radford Hill to the south east at 101m and 97m AOD respectively.
- 3.18. To the west, the site is bound by properties found adjacent to the east of The Valley, beyond which lies small fields associated with Hill Farm and currently in use as a paddock. Further west are Valley Farm and Radford Farm, and beyond this lies the Whitnash suburb of Royal Leamington Spa.
- 3.19. The site is bound to the north by St. Nicholas Road with residential built form comprising two-storey semi-detached properties. Beyond this lies further residential development and the wider settlement of Radford Semele.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 3.20. In terms of landscape character, the starting point in assessing the effect of the development is to consider the sensitivity of the landscape. This combines a judgement on value and susceptibility.
- 3.21. The site is not situated within or within proximity to any area designated either Nationally or Locally for its landscape value. It is not the subject of any statutory designation or local landscape policy which is based on condition or quality criteria. However, as set-out at paragraph 113 of the NPPF, there is a need to protect valued landscapes, whilst ensuring that protection is commensurate with their importance. As there is no definition of what constitutes a valued landscape contained in the NPPF, it is necessary to ascertain how the local landscape within which the site is situated may be valued based upon considered site specific analysis.
- 3.22. However, GLVIA 3, paragraph 5.26 makes clear that:

"The fact that an area of landscape is not designated either nationally or locally does not mean that it does not have any value".
- 3.23. Having 'value' and being a 'valued landscape' are not inter-changeable terms. A landscape may have a degree of local value but that does not equate to possessing value sufficient to reach and surpass the necessary threshold to be 'valued' by a community at either a local or national scale.
- 3.24. A number of recent Appeal decisions and High Court Judgements have considered the issue of landscape value and it has been the case through these Appeals that, in order for a landscape to be considered 'of Value' it needs to be more than ordinary. In an Appeal Decision relating to Land south of Knightcott Road, Banwell, Somerset (13th October 2016) Inspector Pope states, at paragraph 47 that:



“There is no definition of “valued landscape” within the Framework. However, following the Judgement in Stroud District Council v SoS CLG and Gladman Developments Limited [2015] EWHC 488 (Admin) the site must possess demonstrable physical attributes which would take it beyond mere countryside”.

- 3.25. He then goes on to undertake an analysis of the Value Indicators as set-out in the GLVIA3, Box 5.1, stating at paragraphs 48 and 49 that:

“In considering the physical attributes of the site my attention has been drawn to Landscape Institute’s ‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment’ (GLVIA) third edition. This does not comprise planning policy or Government guidance but it can assist in identifying valued landscapes. It has been referred to by both main parties within their landscape assessments.

For undesignated landscapes, GLVIA advises that the start point in establishing its value would be landscape character assessments and associated planning policies and/or strategies and guidelines which could give an indication of particularly valued aspects of the landscape. I also note from GLVIA that a strategy of landscape conservation is usually a good indicator of this. A range of factors are set out in GLVIA to help identify valued landscapes.”

- 3.26. In order to ascertain whether the landscape of the site is valued, the GLVIA3 approach has been adopted within this LVIA. A summary of the value assessment for the site and the surrounding landscape is set-out below.

Value

- 3.27. In considering the value of the landscape the following aspects of the landscape are noted as relevant in the assessment process:

Landscape Quality (condition): A measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements;

Scenic Quality: The term used to describe landscapes which appeal to the senses (primarily but not wholly the visual senses);

Rarity: The presence of rare features and elements in the landscape or the presence of a rare Landscape Character Type;

Representativeness: Whether the landscape contains a particular, and/or features and elements, which are considered particularly important examples;

Conservation Interests: The presence of features of wildlife, earth science or archaeological or historical and cultural interest can add to the value of a landscape as well as having value in their own right;

Recreation Value: Evidence that the landscape is valued for recreational activity where experience of the landscape is important;

Perceptual aspects: A landscape may be valued for its perceptual qualities and/or tranquillity;

Associations: Some landscapes are associated with particular people, such as artists or writers, or event in history that contribute to perceptions of natural beauty of the area.”



- 3.28. For each of these considerations there is a range from 'good' through 'ordinary' to 'poor' in terms of the landscape performance against these criteria. In the table below these issues are considered in relation to the site (as illustrated on **Plan 2**), with reference to the detailed landscape assessment undertaken by Tyler Grange.

Criteria	TG Observations/Comments
Landscape Quality	<p>The site generally reflects the Dunsmore Plateau Fringe landscape type, most notably the “<i>Pockets of permanent pasture and smaller hedged fields, usually associated with more steeply sloping ground</i>” and “<i>An undulating topography of low rounded hills and narrow meandering river valley</i>” with landscape typical of this found immediately beyond the site boundaries to the east of the site, and beyond the Birch coppice to the south of ‘Tinker’s Close’ on the southern side boundary.</p> <p>Whilst the site contains features representative of the wider landscape character, the detrimental effect of the adjacent development to the north and west, in combination with the poor quality of the existing boundaries, means the landscape quality can only be considered as ‘ordinary’.</p>
Scenic Quality	<p>From the wider landscape, the individual site location is difficult to discern when seen against the urban periphery, and can only be identified by neighbouring built development.</p> <p>Because of this, the scenic quality is considered to be ‘ordinary’.</p>
Rarity	<p>The landscape of the site is broadly consistent with the wider landscape character area, namely “<i>pockets of permanent pasture and smaller hedged fields, usually associated with more steeply sloping ground</i>” with features present that are typical and not rare locally or at a broader scale.</p> <p>The rarity of the site is therefore considered to be ‘ordinary’.</p>
Representativeness	<p>The site does not contain features and/or elements considered to be of particular importance within the local landscape context and is therefore considered to be ‘ordinary’.</p>
Conservation Interests	<p>The site does not lie within or adjacent to a Conservation Area and although there are listed buildings in the vicinity, they are seen within the existing built edge setting.</p> <p>The site is known to support a number of protected species, and contains habitat conducive with their ongoing success.</p> <p>The ecological and conservation interests add value to this landscape, and it is therefore considered ‘good’.</p>
Recreational Value	<p>Currently access is only possible along the permissive path found along the northern boundary. The site does not contain any</p>

Criteria	TG Observations/Comments
	formal recreational asset in its current form. Therefore, the site is considered to be of ' ordinary ' value.
Perceptual Aspects	<p>The character of the site is defined by the proximity and outward visual influences of the wider rural area combined with the urban influences of the local built form. The existing built form, located adjacent to the northern, southern and western site boundaries, contains the site against the open arable land further to the east and forms an urban-edge setting for the site location.</p> <p>When considered against the context of neighbouring residential development and an urban edge setting, the site and surrounding landscape is considered 'ordinary' in terms of perceptual aspects.</p>
Associations	There are no known associations which would indicate a strong and important link between this landscape and its historic or current appreciation. It is therefore considered ' ordinary ' as it is part of the existing settlement edge.

- 3.29. Having considered these key elements related to value it is considered that there is nothing associated with the site that makes this land as a whole more than **Ordinary** and is therefore valued at **Low - Local Importance**.

Susceptibility to Change

- 3.30. In relation to the susceptibility³, based on our experience as professional practitioners and derived from various workshops coordinated by the LI on the GLVIA, we apply the levels of susceptibility for this project as being:

High Susceptibility - The landscape is such that changes (in terms of the residential development proposals) would be entirely at odds with the character of the local area.

Medium Susceptibility - The landscape is capable of receiving development of a residential scheme of the nature and scale proposed, where a degree of consistency is sought in relation to the existing scale, pattern, grain and use. Mitigation may be appropriate to enhance assimilation.

Low Susceptibility – The landscape has the ability to receive a development of a residential scheme of the nature and scale proposed without undue negative consequences and would be wholly consistent with the local area.

- 3.31. Given the baseline context described above, it is determined that the site represents **Medium Susceptibility**. Contextually the site represents a settlement fringe land parcel, adjoined to the immediate north, south and west by residential built form with which it has a visual relationship. It is

³ Landscape Susceptibility - The ability of a defined landscape to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue negative consequences



considered that a development proposal, consistent with the existing scale, pattern and land use of the receiving settlement fringe at Radford Semele, can be accommodated. The development proposal should include appropriate measures, including development offsets, active frontages and Green Infrastructure considerations, described further in **Section 5** of this report, to mitigate against undue negative consequences.

- 3.32. Considering the above baseline information and site specific context, it is considered that the site is of an overall **Medium** sensitivity to residential development of the nature and scale proposed.

Interim Conclusions

- 3.33. The site and its immediate environs share some of the characteristics of the published landscape type for Dunsmore Plateau Fringe local landscape area, with loose clusters of dwellings and smaller hedged fields associated with steeply sloping ground partially overlooked by large arable fields to the east. The adjacent properties and nearby suburban setting influences the character and immediate context of the site.



Section 4: Visual Context

- 4.1. In order to establish the degree of any change that may arise from a future residential development on-site and the extent to which such changes will affect identified local receptors, it is important to understand the existing situation in terms of visual amenity alongside the availability and context of views associated with the local area.
- 4.2. Chapter 6 of GLVIA3 sets out how the visual baseline is established. The baseline for visual effects should establish the area in which the proposed development may be visible, those people who may experience views of the development, the viewpoints where they will be affected and the nature of the views at the viewpoints.

Identification of Receptors

- 4.3. The extent of the baseline study area was established through GIS topographical analysis and the production of a Theoretical Zone of Visual Influence (**Plan 4**) which calculates the extent to which the site could potentially be seen from the wider area. The software generated image illustrates the extent to which the site at ground level is potentially visible within a 5km radius to a 1.6m high receptor. The calculation is based on Ordnance Survey Terrain 5 data only, and does not take into account built form or vegetation present within the landscape.
- 4.4. The Theoretical Zone of Visual Influence (ZTV) generated for this development clearly identifies the flat, open nature of the wider landscape, whilst also showing the localised valley of the setting of Radford Semele.
- 4.5. This first sieve exercise has been verified in the field to take into account any significant vegetation or built form which further restricts or limits the extent of visibility. Following the completion of a visit to the site on 21st February 2017 a field verified Visual Envelope (VE) was prepared (illustrated on **Plan 6**). In accordance with GLVIA3, the visual analysis is based on views from external spaces within the public domain excluding barely discernible views and not from inside buildings or private spaces. However, where notable views from private properties are possible, these have been recorded and comments made if appropriate.
- 4.6. Photographs were taken from selected viewpoints with a digital camera with an equivalent 50mm focal length lens at eye level (approximately 1600mm above ground). A total of 8 representative viewpoints have been chosen from locations surrounding the site to enable the effects of the development to be assessed from all directions (see **Photosheets for Photoviewpoints 1-8** contained at the rear of this report). Whilst the views are chosen to be representative of the area, they cannot provide continuous coverage of all potential locations within the vicinity of the development. Often views will occur as a sequence within the surrounding environment. Where this is a significant aspect of the landscape experience sequential views have been noted within the assessment. Likewise, where transient or fleeting views are possible, and of significance as part of the landscape experience, they have been addressed in the assessment.



- 4.7. Views of the site have been considered at three distances:
- Long Distance Views – beyond 1km from the site;
 - Middle Distance Views- 500m – 1km from the site; and
 - Local Views – Less than 500m from the site.
- 4.8. The 8 viewpoints are as follows, with further analysis provided on each of the Photosheets:
- **Photoviewpoint 1:** Facing east from the Permissive Path at the northwestern site boundary. Receptors to this view will be recreational users of the Path including walkers and dog-walkers;
 - **Photoviewpoint 2:** Facing west from the Permissive Path at the northeastern site boundary. Receptors to this view will be recreational users of the Path including walkers and dog-walkers;
 - **Photoviewpoint 3:** Facing west from Footpath W123b as it runs parallel to the eastern site boundary, at the junction with the Permissive Path, approximately 5m from the eastern site boundary. Receptors to this view will be recreational users of the PRoW;
 - **Photoviewpoint 4:** Facing east from the Permissive Path, at its junction with The Valley, approximately 5m from the northern site boundary. Receptors to this view will be recreational users of the Path including walkers and dog-walkers. This viewpoint also represents the transient view as experienced by users of The Valley, including horse riders and cyclists heading to the bridleway W122 that begins at the southern end of The Valley;
 - **Photoviewpoint 5:** Facing east from Footpath W120 as it approaches Hill Farm from the north, approximately 150m from the western site boundary. Receptors to this view will be recreational users of the PRoW and workers/visitors travelling to Hill Farm;
 - **Photoviewpoint 6:** Facing east from Footpath W120b approximately 160m south of Valley Road, and approximately 270m from the western site boundary. Receptors to this view will be recreational users of the PRoW and users of Hill Farm;
 - **Photoviewpoint 7:** Facing southwest from Footpath W123, approximately 75m from the junction with Footpath W122c, approximately 425m from the eastern site boundary. Receptors to this view will be recreational users of the PRoW;
 - **Photoviewpoint 8:** Facing northwest from Footpath W122c, approximately 75m from the junction with Footpath W122c, approximately 425m from the eastern site boundary. Receptors to this view will be recreational users of the PRoW.

Extent and Composition of Views of the Site

- 4.9. The visual context and extent of the field verified Visual Envelope (VE) (as illustrated on **Plan 6**) can be summarised as:
1. Visibility is limited to close proximity by the arrangement of adjoining built form, vegetation and local topography. Close-range views across the site are available from the Permissive Path as it passes along the northern site boundary (**Photoviewpoints 1 and 2**), and from existing residential development to the south of St Nicholas Road and to the east of The Valley;
 2. Views towards the site can be experienced from Footpath W123b, but are limited to a length of the footpath of approximately 300m long in the vicinity of the site boundary. Beyond this point, to the north and south, views are heavy filtered by the existing vegetation on the eastern boundary and local built development. Immediately adjacent to the eastern site boundary, views are filtered by the existing vegetation (**Photoviewpoint 3**).



3. Glimpsed views towards the site are available from the existing field gateway on The Valley (**Photoviewpoint 4**).
4. Views towards the site are available from public rights of way to the west (**Photoviewpoints 5 and 6**) but these are filtered by both intervening vegetation and the existing properties along The Valley. Views from here are however limited to the southeastern extents of the site where the land is at a higher elevation.
5. The site is visible from the east, and can be seen from the footpath W122c that heads south from the A425 then turns west towards the birch coppice, though it is seen in the context of the existing vegetation and residential development (**Photoviewpoints 7 and 8**). Views from further east are largely obscured by the layering-effect of interim vegetation and the localised landform.
6. Glimpsed and transient views of the site may be seen by drivers heading west on the A425 (As represented by **Photoviewpoint 7**), but they will be fleeting due to the speed of travel, and will be seen in the context of the urban form of Radford Semele.

Types of Receptors

- 4.10. Within the field verified Visual Envelope, the visual receptors, i.e. those people or groups of people who are likely to see the site and experience a potential change in the view should it be developed, can be summarised as follows (see **Plan 6**):
 1. 14 properties, along St. Nicholas Road and The Valley, with direct views over the site, to the northern, western and southern site boundaries;
 2. Recreational users of the Permissive Path along the northern site boundary;
 3. Users of footpaths and bridleways local to the site (W123b, W120 and W120b), especially adjacent to the eastern site boundary;
 4. Residents and workers at Hill Farm, to the west of the site;
 5. Pedestrians and cyclists using The Valley, to the west of the site;
 6. Heavily screened views of the site may be possible from footpaths W122c and W123; and,
 7. Users of the A425 to the north east of the site.

- 4.11. The following receptors have been scoped out of this report as they won't or are unlikely to be affected by the development:
 - Drivers travelling along Lewis Road;
 - Users of bridleway W122 to the southwest of the site; and,
 - Workers at Valley Farm, to the west of the site.



Section 5: The Proposals

- 5.1. In response to the reasons of refusal outlined for the previous application, landscape and visual baseline analysis and review of local planning policy, a series of landscape objectives, opportunities and constraints have been developed by Tyler Grange to ensure that the future development responds to and reflects the local circumstances and addresses opportunities for landscape enhancement.
- 5.2. The development principles that have emerged are described below, these are based on good design principles and mitigation measures. Mitigation Measures are those measures proposed to prevent/avoid, reduce and where possible offset or remedy (or compensate for) any significant adverse landscape and visual effects.
- Retain existing vegetation where practicable and subject to the advice of ecological and arboricultural consultants;
 - Proposed development to be of a scale, height, massing and design that reflects the local character of properties within Radford Semele, using appropriate materials and finishes;
 - New properties should be limited to two storeys to limit visual intrusion and provide a contextual fit with the existing houses along local roads and within the village;
 - Opportunity for residential development to be located towards the northwestern extents of the site, on the lower ground and away from existing mature vegetation;
 - Proposed residential development to respond to the existing built development of St. Nicholas Road and the north-eastern extents of the 'Tinker's Close' property;
 - The provision of new native tree planting to the eastern development edge to enhance and strengthen the existing vegetation and soften the development boundary;
 - The potential to connect areas of new public open space and properties within the site with the wider public rights of way network;
 - Internal vehicular and pedestrian routes can encompass new street trees, ornamental shrubs and native hedgerows to further enhance the on-site Green Infrastructure provision. Such planting can serve to supplement the existing site boundary trees and hedgerows on-site.
- 5.3. The proposed design recommendations demonstrate a strategy to retain and manage landscape features as well as ensuring future succession of new planting whilst improving the condition and connectivity of boundary trees and hedgerows as part of a site-wide planting and urban greening strategy.
- 5.4. A successful detailed design response would complement the adjoining rural village landscape to implement a residential development suitable to the location. The proposals can create a transitional edge to the settlement, screened by proposed new landscape planting, established boundary vegetation and existing built form.
- 5.5. A principle objective is to seek the sensitive incorporation of development in terms of the receiving character. Strengthening existing boundary planting and pulling development back from the north, east and south of the site will afford space for new and enhanced ecological linkages, and protect visually sensitive edges.



Section 6: Nature of Change

- 6.1. To provide transparency as to the judgements made in this appraisal, the following text describes how the existing landscape and the views and visual amenity of the area may be affected if the site is developed, predicting the potential effects (though not their likely significance) and how those effects might be mitigated, if required.

Landscape Character

- 6.2. The following text summarises the landscape resources and elements directly associated with the site:
- Unmanaged semi-improved grassland landscape;
 - Scattered trees and gappy native hedgerow boundaries to the north, east and southern site boundaries and, in-part, the western boundary;
 - Existing development influence to the north, west and south;
 - Sloping topography;
 - Public Right of Way (W123b) traversing the eastern boundary of the site;
 - Settlement edge context.
- 6.3. As a result of the proposed development, the following effects on the key characteristics of the site will occur:
- A portion of the existing field landscape would be replaced with new residential development, including new street scenes, public open spaces and landscaping. Although the arable field landscape is characteristic of the published LCA, it is not rare or unique when considered in the local context.
 - The arrangement of site boundary vegetation can be retained and enhanced where practicable, and an increase in vegetation cover across the site can be sought via the strengthening of boundaries and internally through new soft landscaping.
 - The provision of new public open space on site would enable increased recreational use of the land accessible via the existing public rights of way network and new green linkages.
 - The adjoining residential influence has the ability to accommodate a development that responds to the surrounding vernacular to provide a layout that respects the character of the settlement edge. The scale and materials used will be considered at the later planning and design stages.
- 6.4. It is accepted that there would be a change to the land use and nature of the site itself, however the changes need to be considered in terms of how the local landscape will continue to be experienced once the development is complete. Whilst there would be a direct loss or alteration to one or more elements/features/characteristics of the existing landscape and the introduction of new built form may appear prominent at close proximity, residential development is not uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape given the presence of existing housing to the north, south and west.
- 6.5. A suitably scaled residential development would affect only a very limited geographical area and should an appropriate masterplan be delivered to reflect; local development density, northern, southern and western boundary offsets, materiality, and existing Green Infrastructure the perception or distinctiveness of the wider published Landscape Character Areas would not be compromised.

- 6.6. The landscape character of the site would inevitably change during the construction period and would include the active presence of plant and machinery and the increasing presence of new built development and infrastructure. Beyond the site boundary, the effects upon local landscape character would generally reduce with distance from the site due to the local topography.
- 6.7. Conservation of the majority of the existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees would assist in limiting the effects locally and these conserved hedgerows and trees would be protected during the course of the construction activity.
- 6.8. Where existing trees and hedgerows are retained, and new planting and POS implemented as part of a landscape-led residential scheme on site, the enhanced Green Infrastructure and recreational provision for the locality would go some way to balancing out the change brought about by the introduction of residential development in this location.

Visual

- 6.9. Given the proximity there will be an inevitable impact on views and a noticeable increase in the extent of built form for residential receptors overlooking the scheme at the northern and western site boundary, although the perceived impacts upon adjacent dwellings are likely to diminish over time should the implementation of appropriate scaling, materials, planting and development offsets be sought. The creation of a high quality residential development would not negatively impact upon local amenity for receptors beyond those 14 dwellings with direct views over the site, due to restricted inter-visibility limiting the impact of potential development from the wider Radford Semele setting.
- 6.10. The influence of settlement edge development upon the surrounding landscape would be apparent, particularly in relation to the landscape local to the site. Urban fringe fields are viewed with a backdrop of residential built form and the proposed development would be experienced in this context. The existing permissive footpath could be experienced within a new green corridor as part of a site wide integrated Green Infrastructure strategy and recreational uses enhanced through the creation of a new public open space to the northern edge of the development.
- 6.11. Vegetation within and along the edges of the site will be retained and enhanced through management, supplemented with new planting and accommodated with development offsets to limit the adverse effects of visual change on-site.
- 6.12. The development is likely to be apparent to users of local PRoW, although any change will be seen in the context of the existing urban edge and therefore any visual change is expected to be minimal. Furthermore, as new and enhanced boundary treatments and proposed Green Infrastructure measures mature, the development will become further integrated into its surroundings and less visible to all receptors.



Section 7: Conclusions

- 7.1. Development on any green field site will lead to landscape and visual change within the local context. The effects on the landscape and visual environment are only part of the overall consideration in respect of making a decision on the planning balance, but the aim of preparing design recommendations at this stage with regard to landscape and visual matters is to ensure a landscape-led masterplan is considered at the earliest stages of the design process. This ensures that impacts can be fully considered and minimised with a view to assimilating new development into its context.

Consideration of Policy Compliance

7.2. **Policy NE4 – Landscape**

- The scheme would be sited at a settlement edge location. The siting of specific units, levels, development density, form, scale, height, massing, detailing, colouration and materials can be addressed at the later planning and detailed design stages to ensure a townscape which is consistent with the characteristics of the adjoining settlement edge.
- The proposals can incorporate active frontages, development offsets and outward facing units along the site boundaries to assist with the positive assimilation of the scheme in relation to the adjoining landscape.

7.3. **Policy BE1 – Layout and Design**

- The masterplan for the scheme would be laid out in such a way as to work with the local topography to minimise the visual intrusion on the local landscape.
- The proposals would be for residential development that is to be in keeping with existing architectural form, scale and vernacular.

7.4. **Overarching Policy SC0 – Sustainable Communities**

- The masterplan for the development would be designed in such a way as to deliver a high-quality layout which forms an integral part of the wider urban edge landscape.
- The proposed layout

7.5. **Policy QL11 – Environmental Impacts and Compatibility of Uses**

- The development would be of a form that would readily integrate itself into the existing local community in terms of layout and design.
- The proposals would ensure protection and, where practicable, enhancement for existing ecological, environmental and natural features and ensuring no net loss in biodiversity.

- 7.6. There is no policy impediment (on landscape character and visual grounds) to development of the site and a future masterplan can respond in a positive manner to those landscape and visual matters highlighted by Tyler Grange. A successful design would deliver a soft edge, avoiding a linear arrangement of buildings, with a northern boundary corridor retained as part of the wider Green Infrastructure network, connecting with the adjacent PRoW to the east. The corridor could be managed for ecological enhancements and provide amenity benefits as public open space.

Landscape Character

- 7.7. The site and its immediate environs share some of the characteristics of the published landscape character study for the Plateau Fringe landscape type, with pockets of permanent pasture and smaller hedged fields on relatively steeply sloping ground; although there are local variations inherent with the existing settlement edge location of the site
- 7.8. The proposed development would alter the character of the site from semi-improved grassland to low density built residential development and access road located away from the northern boundary behind an existing vegetation. A substantial area of open space to the north, east and south of the site will contain new tree planting, creating a buffer landscape to help preserve the surrounding landscape character and soften views. The loss of the existing western section of the field would be irreversible; however, as part of the development, the existing peripheral hedgerows and trees on the Site boundaries would be retained and supplemented with new planting, with a northern green corridor proposed to maintain the existing permissive path PRoW.

Visual

- 7.9. A suitably scaled residential development would be relatively inconspicuous at this location with views into the site limited by the presence of existing built development and boundary vegetation. Furthermore, the presence of undulating landform and a strong framework of intervening vegetation assist in screening the site from the wider landscape and visual receptors.
- 7.10. The development can also be set back from the northern, eastern and southern boundaries forming a development buffer to accommodate new tree planting, active frontages and recreation opportunities which will maintain a green link between the site and the existing PRoW to the east.
- 7.11. Vegetation within and along the boundaries of the site could be retained where practicable and enhanced through management, supplemented with new planting and accommodated by appropriate development offsets to limit the adverse effects of visual change resulting from the proposed development.
- 7.12. In conclusion, there would be no overriding adverse effects that should preclude the proposed development on landscape and visual grounds. It is considered that a high-quality scheme can be delivered on the site which is in keeping with best practice and current government guidance and which would make a positive contribution to the local landscape and townscape.



Plans

Plan 1: Site Location Plan
10808/P01 February 2017

Plan 2: Site Context - Aerial Photography
10808/P05 February 2017

Plan 3: Topography
10808/P03 February 2017

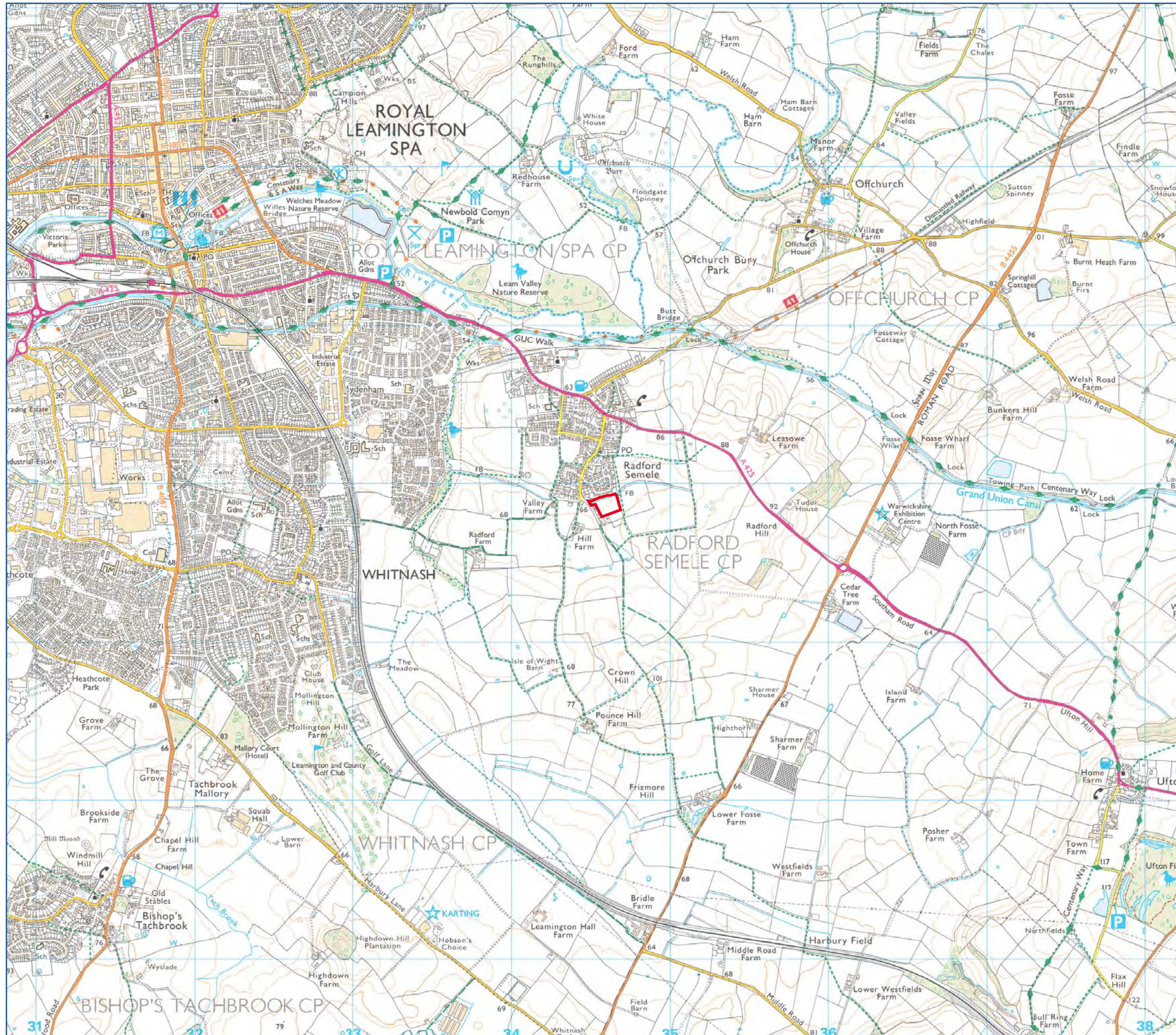
Plan 4: GIS Zone of Theoretical Visibility
10808/P04 February 2017

Plan 5: Landscape Planning Context and Public Rights of Way
10808/P06 February 2017

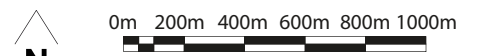
Plan 6: Photoviewpoint Locations and Visual Analysis
10808/P07 February 2017

Photosheets for Photoviewpoints 1 to 8
10808/P08 February 2017





 Site Boundary







Scale@1:25,000
 Project Land off The Valley
 Radford Semele, Leamington Spa
 Drawing Title **Plan 1: Site Location Plan**
 Scale 1:25,000@A3
 Drawing No. 10808/P01
 Date February 2017
 Checked AMcP/MF



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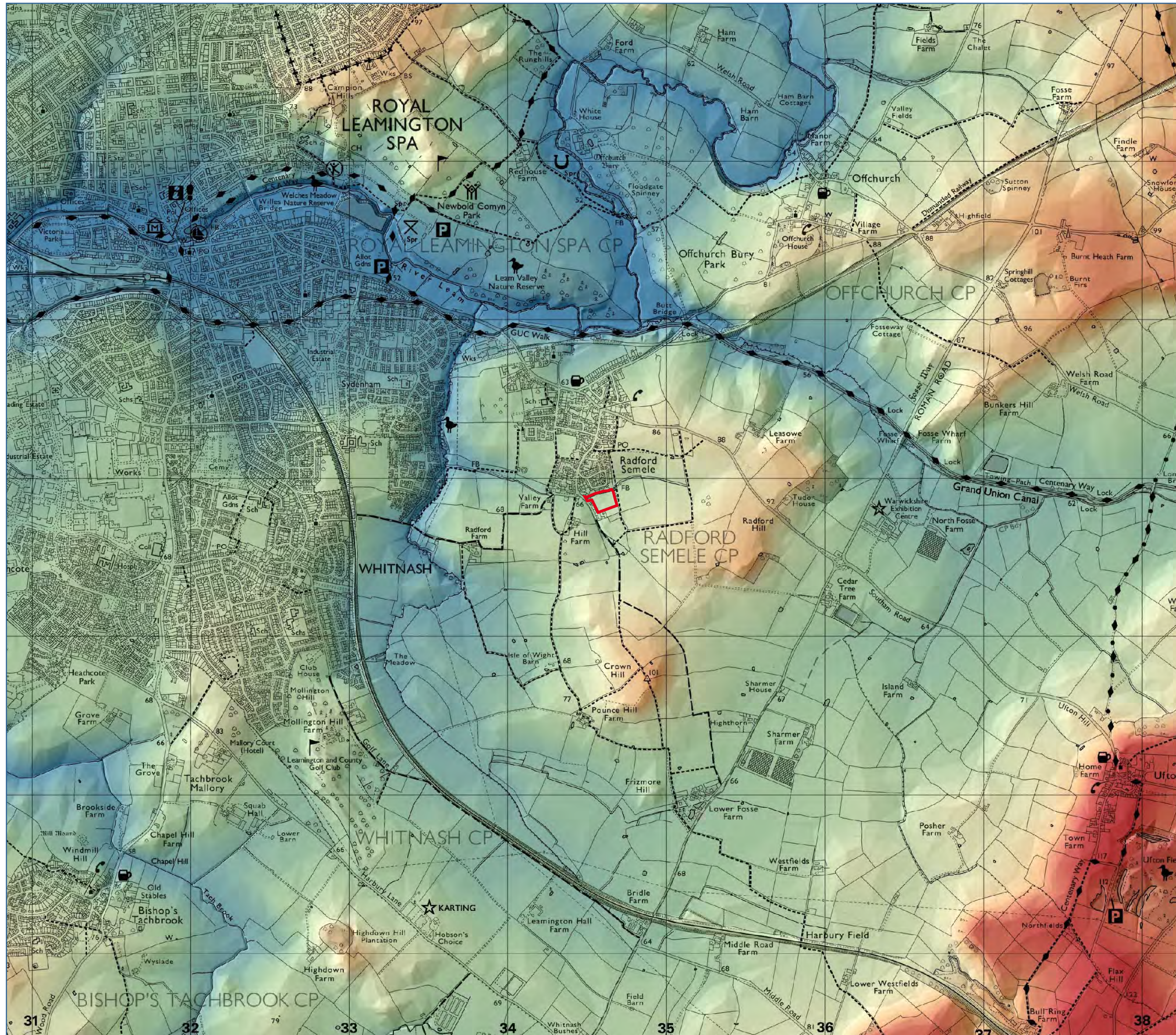
-  Site Boundary
-  Photoviewpoint Location
-  Public Rights of Way
-  Permissive Path



Project Land off The Valley
 Radford Semele, Leamington Spa
Drawing Title **Plan 2: Site Context - Aerial Photography**
Scale 1:1,250@A3
Drawing No. 10808/P05
Date February 2017
Checked AMcP/MF

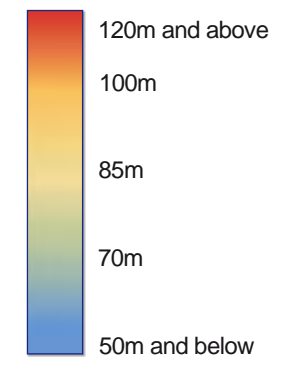


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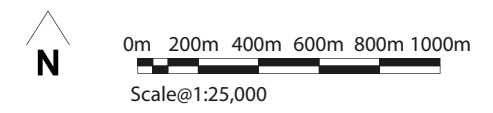


 Site Boundary

Height AOD (m)



Source:
The plan has been modelled using GIS computer software (QGIS) and Ordnance Survey Terrain 5 data, and as such does not take into account built form or vegetation present within the landscape.



Project Land off The Valley
Radford Semele, Leamington Spa

Drawing Title **Plan 3: Topography**

Scale 1:25,000@A3

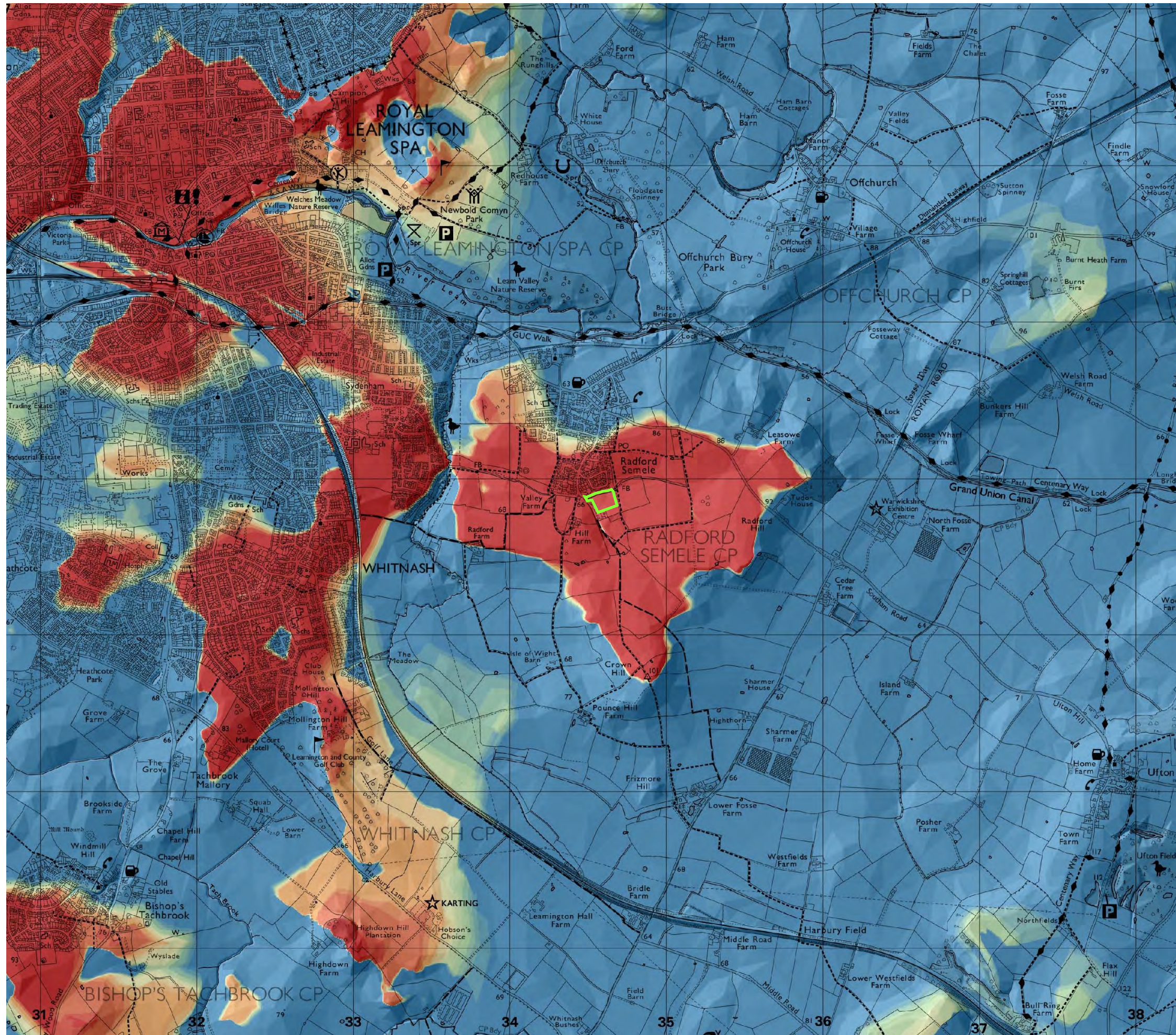
Drawing No. 10808/P03

Date February 2017

Checked AMcP/MF

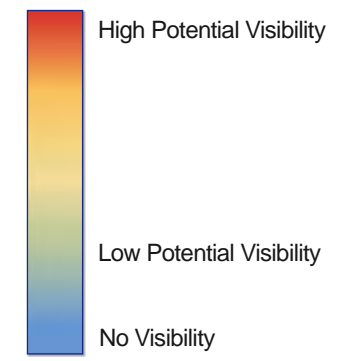


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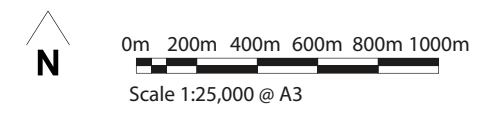


 Site Boundary

Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)



Source:
 The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) illustrates the extent to which the site at ground level is potentially visible within a 5km radius (1.6m high receptor). The ZTV has been modelled using GIS computer software (Global Mapper) and Ordnance Survey Terrain 5 data, and as such does not take into account built form or vegetation present within the landscape. Field verification is required to refine the accuracy of the ZTV.



Project | Land off The Valley
 Radford Semele, Leamington Spa

Drawing Title | **Plan 4:**
GIS Zone of Theoretical Visibility

Scale | 1:25,000@A3

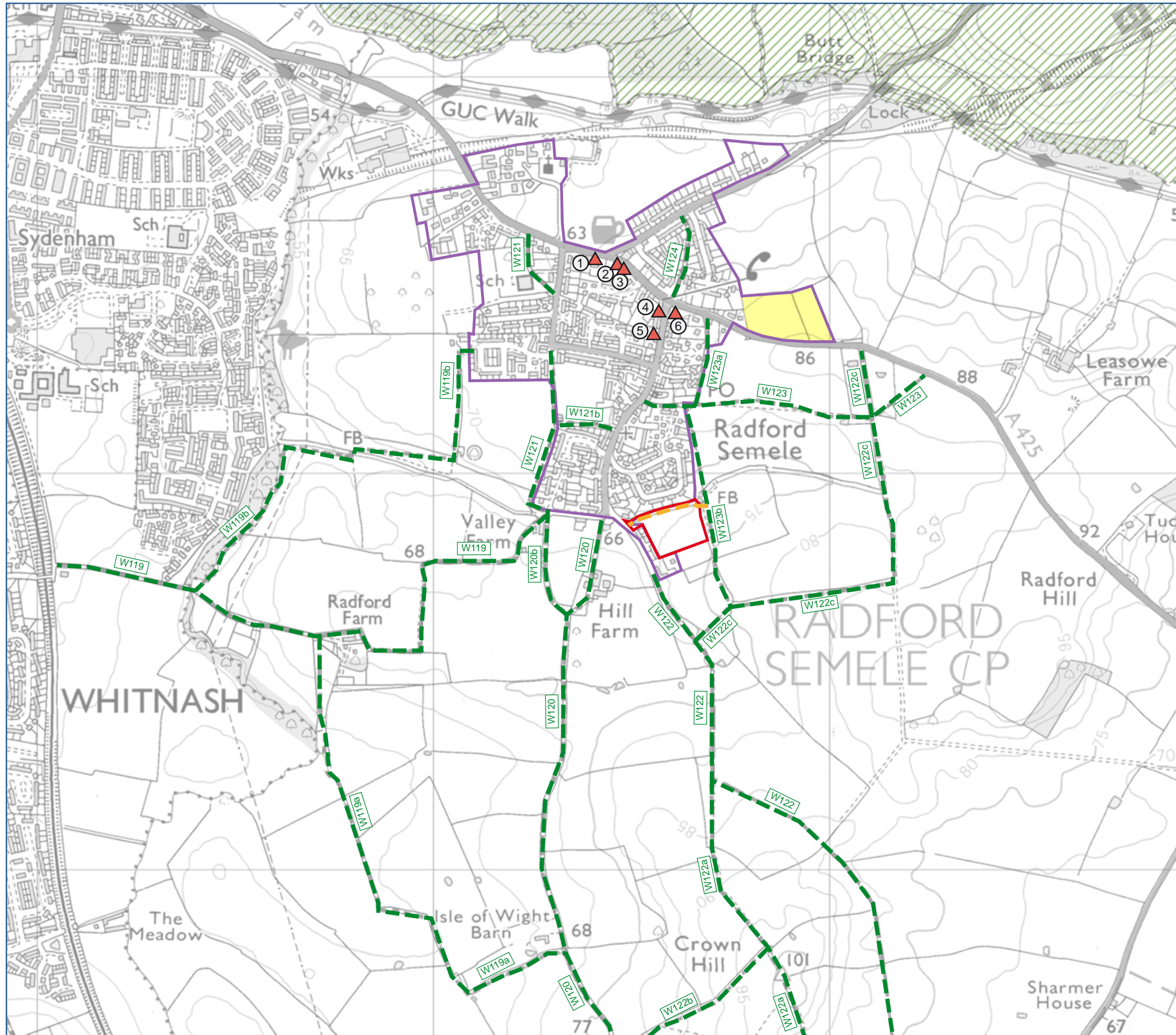
Drawing No. | 10808/P04

Date | February 2017

Checked | AMcP/MF



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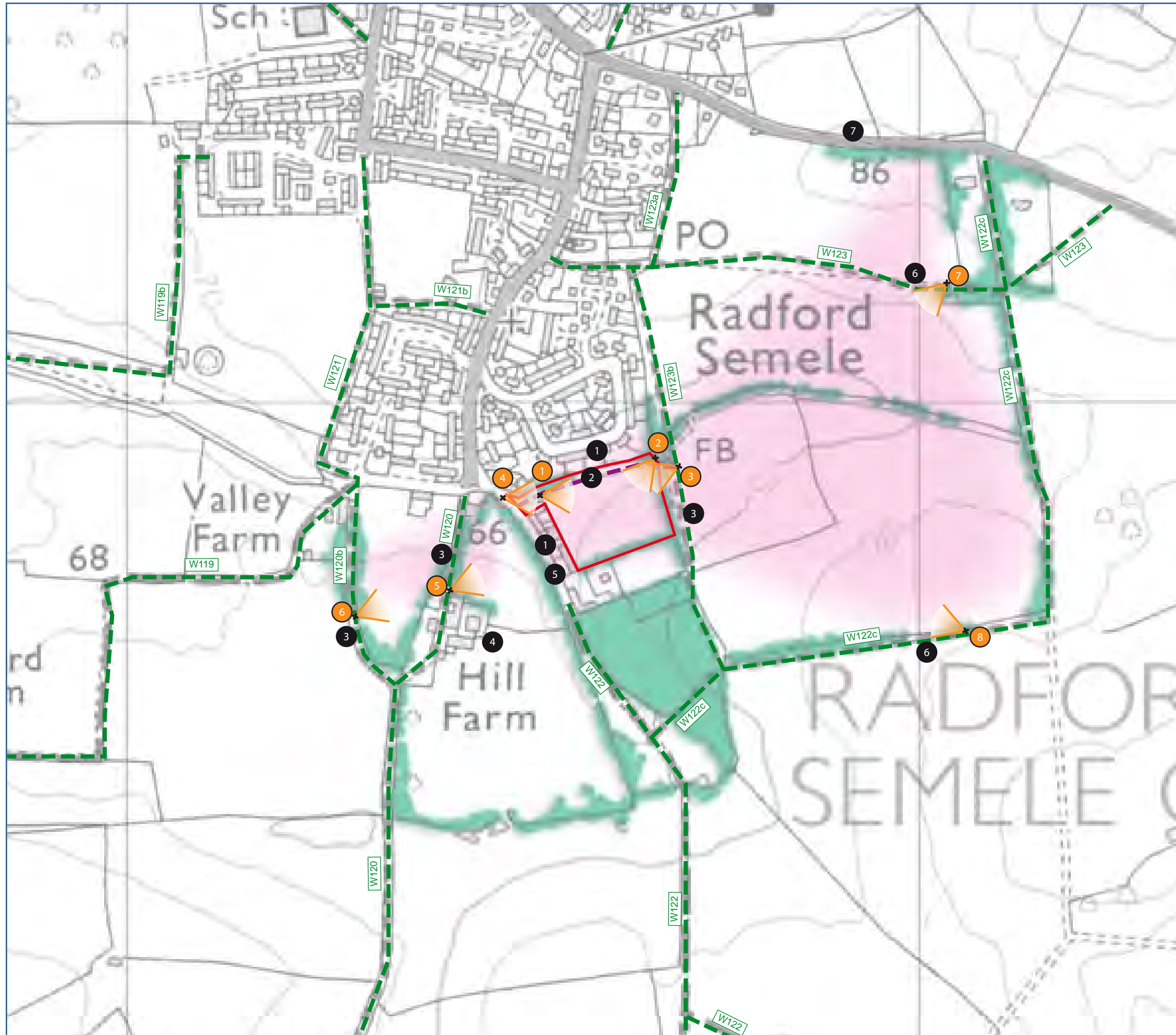
- Site Boundary
 - Public Rights of Way
 - Permissive Path
- Warwick District Council**
- WDLP - Growth Village Envelopes (H10)*
 - WDLP - Green Belt (DS19)*
 - WDLP - Housing Allocations (DS11)*
 - Listed Building**
 - ① The White Lion Public House
 - ② 64 and 66 Southam Road
 - ③ The Manor Cottage
 - ④ The Old Dairy
 - ⑤ Mornington Cottage
 - ⑥ 1 Lewis Road








* Information from Warwick District Local Plan (Publication Draft 2014)
 ** Information from Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside MAGiC map website


N
 0m 100m 200m 300m 400m 500m
 Scale@1:10,000
 Project Land off The Valley
 Radford Semele, Leamington Spa
 Drawing Title **Plan 5: Landscape Planning Context and Public Rights of Way**
 Scale 1:10,000@A3
 Drawing No. 10808_P06
 Date February 2017
 Checked AMcP/MF



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-  Site Boundary
-  Photoviewpoint Location
-  Public Rights of Way
-  Permissive Path
-  Field-verified Visual Envelope
-  Key Vegetation and Trees filtering views
-  Key Receptors (see accompanying report)

 0m 100m 200m 300m 400m 500m
 Scale@1:10,000

Project Land off The Valley
 Radford Semele, Leamington Spa

Drawing Title **Plan 8: Photoviewpoint Location Plan**

Scale 1:10,000@A3
 Drawing No. 10808_P08
 Date February 2017
 Checked AMcP/MF



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Photoviewpoint 1:	Facing east from the Permissive Path at the northwestern site boundary	Distance from Site:	0m	Orientation:	West	Coordinates:	434527,263886
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Description / Commentary:	This viewpoint represents a local view from the northern site boundary, and illustrates the view east into the site from the existing Permissive Path right of way. The view shows the rising landform of the site area and the existing vegetation of the eastern and southern site boundaries. The existing ditch that runs between the Permissive Path and boundaries of property on St. Nicholas Road can be seen in the left of the image.
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Photoviewpoint 2:	Facing west from the Permissive Path at the northeastern site boundary	Distance from Site:	0m	Orientation:	East	Coordinates:	434662,263924
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Description / Commentary:	This viewpoint represents a local view from the northern site boundary, and illustrates the view west into the site from the existing Permissive Path right of way. The middle-distance of the view shows the properties along The Valley that align the eastern site boundary; beyond this the landform rising up to Hill Farm can be seen.
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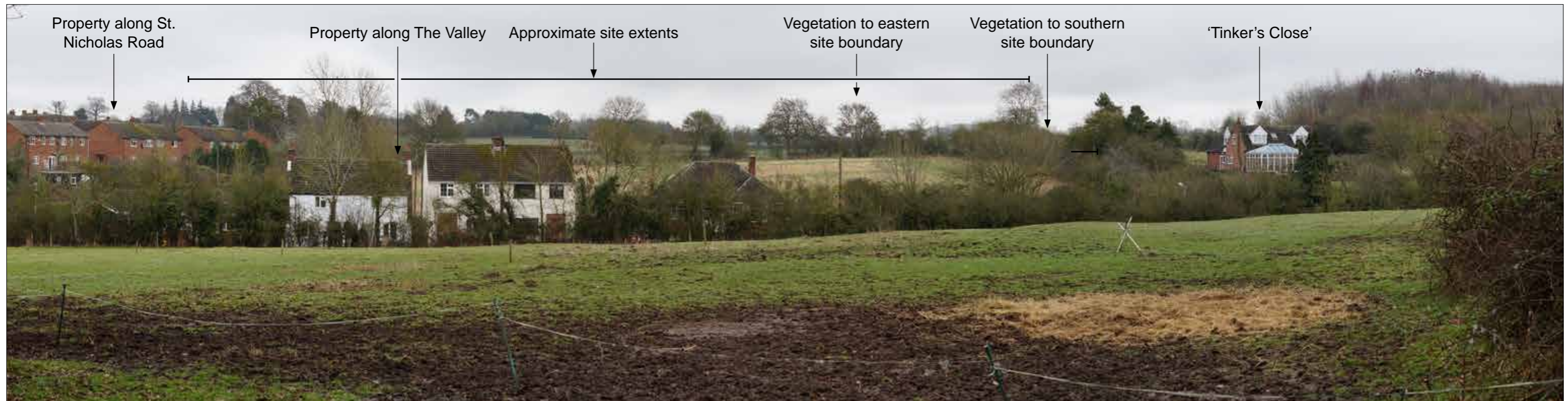
Photoviewpoint 3:	Facing west from Footpath W123b as it runs parallel to the eastern site boundary	Distance from Site:	5m	Orientation:	East	Coordinates:	434689,263912
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Description / Commentary:	Taken from Public Footpath W123b, at the junction with the Permissive Path, as it passes outside the eastern site boundary. Glimpsed views into the site are available through the existing native hedgerow, and these extend across the site towards Hill Farm and the properties found along The Valley.
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Photoviewpoint 4:	Facing east from the Permissive Path, at its junction with The Valley	Distance from Site:	5m	Orientation:	West	Coordinates:	434474,263880
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Description / Commentary:	This viewpoint illustrates the existing access to the development land, and shows the relationship with the existing properties along the Valley. The rising topography of the site means views east from here are limited to the vegetation that forms the eastern site boundary.
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Photoviewpoint 5:	Facing east from Footpath W120 as it approaches Hill Farm	Distance from Site:	150m	Orientation:	West	Coordinates:	434409,263766
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Description / Commentary: The view west towards the site, as experienced by users of Public Footpath W120 and visitors/workers travelling to Hill Farm. The view shows the undulating local topography, illustrated by the elevated portion of the site visible above the single storey properties along The Valley. This image also illustrates the local context of the site, with properties of St. Nicholas Road seen in the left of the view, and 'Tinker's Close' and the southern site boundary seen to the right.



Photoviewpoint 6:	Facing east from Footpath W120b	Distance from Site:	270m	Orientation:	West	Coordinates:	434290, 263750
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Description / Commentary: The local view east towards the site, as experienced by users of Public Footpath W120b. The image illustrates the glimpsed view towards the higher land found towards the south eastern corner of the site, as seen through gaps in the intervening vegetation



Photoviewpoint 7:	Facing southwest from Footpath W123	Distance from Site:	425m	Orientation:	North-East	Coordinates:	435030,264160
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Description / Commentary: This viewpoint is representative of the easternmost extent of the visual envelope, and represents the view towards the site from the Public Footpath that exits the eastern extents of Radford Semele. The existing properties of St. Nicholas Road are visible in the centre of the image, as are the existing properties found along The Valley. The image also illustrates the localised 'valley' of the site location, with the landform rising to Hill Farm beyond.



Photoviewpoint 8:	Facing northwest from Footpath W122c	Distance from Site:	425m	Orientation:	South-East	Coordinates:	435090,263720
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Description / Commentary: This viewpoint is representative of the southernmost extent of the visual envelope, and represents the view towards Radford Semele and the site from Public Footpath W122c. The 'valley' landform of the proposed development locality means the site is largely screened from view, and although the eastern boundary vegetation can be identified, it is seen within the context of the village edge setting.