Dunsbury Park, Portsmouth

Landscape and Visual Evidence and Appraisal

Volume 1 Landscape and Visual Evidence - Plot 1

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terrafirma
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1. Introduction

1.1. Appointment

1.1.1. The terra firma Consultancy was appointed in April 2025 to provide landscape architectural services to accompany the outline planning application for the proposed development of land Dunsbury Park, Havant. Our services involve the production of a Landscape and Visual Evidence and Impact Appraisal (LVA) which, all in light of the client brief, comprises:

- Developing an understanding of the site and its setting;
- Defining what matters most about the landscape and visual aspects;
- Incorporating these into the best possible development proposals which maximises opportunities and potentials; and
- Minimises and mitigates harm;

1.1.2. terra firma previously worked at Dunsbury, firstly producing landscape plans for the road infrastructure and Hermitage Stream enhancements, and later producing a Visual Framework document for Park Lane, and working with the ecologist to produce a Landscape Open Space and Ecology Strategy.

1.1.3. All commitments within this report are applicable to Plot 1 only. While the subject of this report discusses other plots within the Dunsbury site, any commitments applicable to other plots will be confirmed through future planning applications relevant to each plot. For the purposes of the planning process the above work is presented in two volumes

- **Volume 1 Landscape and Visual Evidence** comprises our understanding of the site and its setting and the identification of what is important. This is critical in developing context-appropriate proposals and minimising harm and is the starting point for our work. The design and assessment should not be viewed as a linear process but rather an iterative one, with the identification of potential harm and mitigation informing the design at every stage, along with the work of other disciplines.
- **Volume 2 Landscape and Visual Appraisal** will comprise the assessment / appraisal section of the final landscape report which will be completed once the final design is confirmed and will be an impartial assessment of the landscape and visual effects of the final proposals.

1.2. Report structure

1.2.1. Volume 1 is set out as below:

- Introduction; report structure; project brief; site location;
- Policy framework; planning policies; landscape character assessments; planning evidence;
- Landscape elements, qualities, functions and character: description and sensitivities;
- Views: description and sensitivities;
- Summary of emerging key design drivers; constraints and opportunities.
- Appendix 1: Landscape and Visual Evidence methodology
- Appendix 2: Landscape Baseline Table

1.3. Project brief

1.3.1. The brief for the design team is to produce an outline planning application for the development comprising the continued construction of new industrial B2/B8 units with a remaining combined floor area of approximately 42,500 sq. m. (457,500 sq. ft.), including associated site infrastructure works. The brief for landscape architectural input is to advise on landscape mitigation measures and set out likely landscape and visual effects.

1.3.2. The proposed development relates to plots 100, 400, and 600 (including units 600 and 601), as illustrated in Figure 2.

1.4. Site location and scope of study

1.4.1. Dunsbury Park is located between Waterlooville and Leigh Park on the eastern side of the A3 (see Figure 1). Plots 100, 400 and 600 (as shown in Figure 2) are currently undeveloped and it is these plots which are the subject of this outline planning submission.

1.4.2. The geographical scope of the landscape baseline is proposed as an approximate 1 km radius around the site (see Figure 2). Focus is on the area east of the A3 due to the strong physical and visual barrier of the road corridor. The landscape character of the wider area, as described in published landscape character assessments has been reviewed and used as context. A detailed character assessment of the site and its immediate setting forms part of this study.

1.4.3. The geographical scope of the visual study is informed by the previous study and includes a computer-generated zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) to demonstrate where there are some areas where landform would block views. On site verification of visibility has been undertaken to establish what is visible in the surrounding area from eye level. The ZTV and site assessment of visibility has been checked during fieldwork from publically accessible viewpoints within the study area and

Figure 1 - Site location - wider context

2. Policy and guidance framework

2.4.1. Planning policy of relevance to landscape and visual aspects and the Dunsbury Park area are summarised below, along with commentary as to their implications.

2.4.2. European Landscape Convention (ELC)

- The ELC sets out in the preamble the need for 'Acknowledging that the landscape is an important part of the quality of life for people everywhere: in urban areas and in the countryside, in degraded areas as well as in areas of high quality, in areas recognised as being of outstanding beauty as well as everyday areas'.
- The implication is that it is not just the designated areas, but the whole landscape that has many values and that all of them are formally recognised, but landscape matters to, and is valued by, people and provides a context for people's lives.
- This implication applies to all landscapes everywhere and in any condition – land, inland water, inter-tidal, marine, natural, rural, urban and peri-urban, outstanding, ordinary and degraded.

2.1. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

2.1.1. The NPPF confirms that the purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development and that there should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Planning policy-making and decision-making should take into account the roles and character of different areas and recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services. Paragraph 187 states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- *'protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)'*
- *'recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland'*
- *'minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs'*

2.1.2. In paragraph 189 the NPPF states that:

> *'Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimize adverse impacts on the designated areas'.*

2.2. South Downs National Park (SDNP)

2.2.1. The site approximately 2km south of the South Downs National Park (SDNP) boundary but with no physical or visual connection to it.

2.3. Havant Borough Core Strategy (2013)

2.3.1. The site is a strategic site allocation, policy CS18. The site is also included in the SHELAA(ED04) and as an allocation in the draft local plan – Building a Better Future Plan - (Allocation 27). The Planning Statement forming part of this application sets out the details of these policies in detail, with landscape-related aspects listed below along with other policies of particular relevance to landscape:

2.3.2. **Policy CS11 Protecting and Enhancing the Special Environment and Heritage** of Havant Borough states planning permission will be granted for development that protects and, where possible, enhances Havant's key landscape, biodiversity, and heritage assets. Proposals near locally designated sites such as SINCs must include appropriate mitigation to safeguard ecological value. Development should prevent habitat fragmentation, support species adaptation to climate change, and integrate land management practices that improve natural features. Partnership working with conservation bodies is encouraged to ensure biodiversity protection and public understanding, particularly near sensitive areas. The applicant's team ecologist will advise on ecology aspects and the interface with landscape.

2.3.3. **Policy CS13 Green Infrastructure** states development will be permitted if it maintains and enhances the green infrastructure network, creates new green spaces where needed, and does not harm its integrity.

2.3.4. **Policy CS18 Strategic Site Delivery** (landscape related):

- The design of the new buildings, particularly their bulk and orientation, will respect and enhance the character of their woodland location outside the built up area
- Park Lane will be enhanced as a leisure route and be provided with a metalled surface for use by cyclists and pedestrians
- Green infrastructure links between Havant Thicket Reservoir and Dunsbury Hill Farm will be enhanced

2.3.5. **Policy DM8 Conservation, Protection and Enhancement of Existing Natural Features** requiring the protection of features such as trees, integrating them into the design and using local landscape materials.

2.3.6. Building a Better Future Plan has a number of policies relating to the protection of existing trees, hedgerows and woodland, BNG of 10 percent minimum, and protection of protected and notable species. Again, the team's ecologist will advise on these aspects. In addition the allocation requirements states there should be landscape buffers to offset development from the public right of way and landscape proposals should be native-led and take into account local distinctiveness and conservation priorities.

2.4. Landscape character assessment

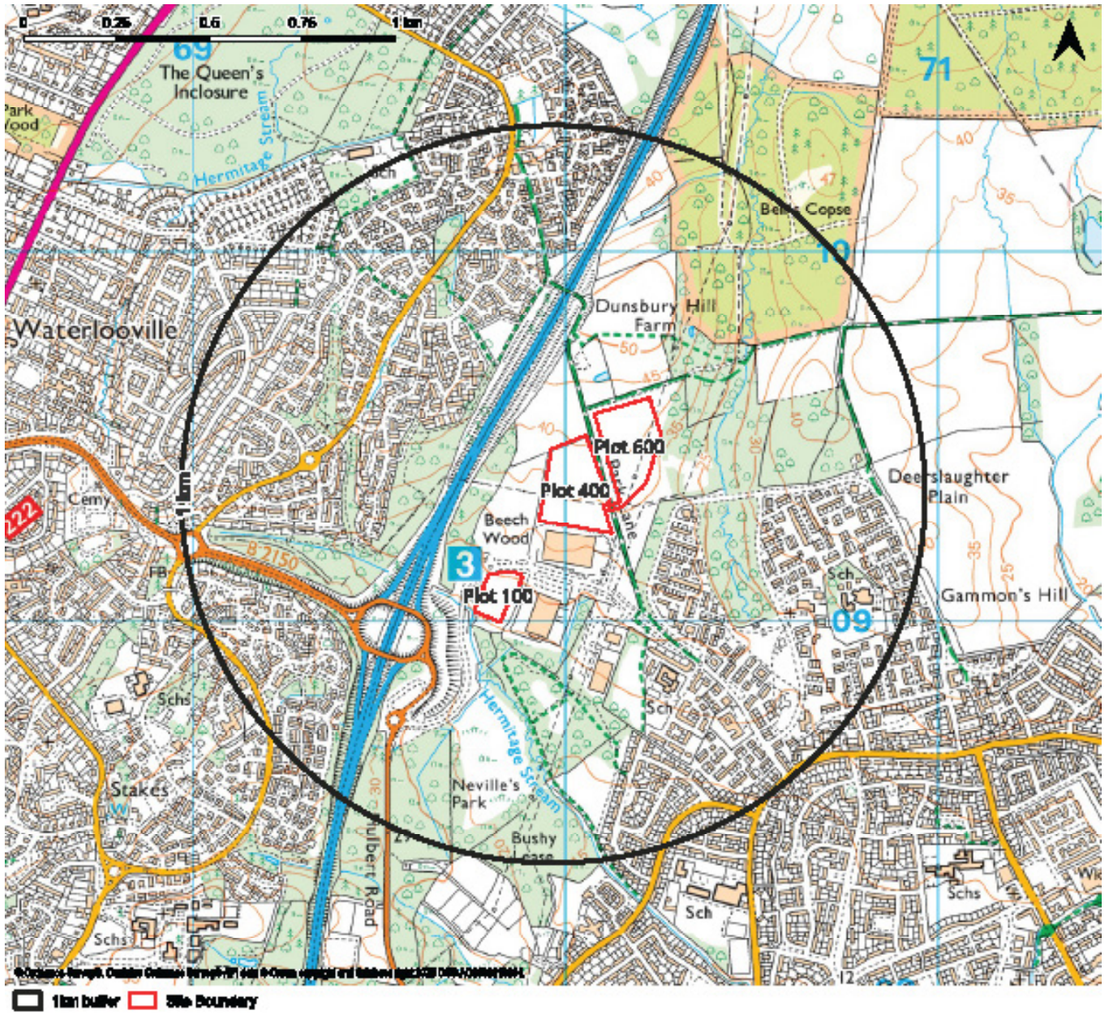
2.4.1. Relevant published landscape character assessments are listed below. These have been reviewed and the relevant key characteristics and guidelines taken into account in section 3 and the table in Appendix 2. The most detailed of these is the Havant Borough study and although it is relatively old it has a good level of detail and identifies valued characteristics as well as detractors and strategies. Therefore we have focussed on this, adding other aspects from the National Character Area (NCA) and Hampshire County, as well as our own observations, where they add to our understanding. The South Downs Landscape Character Assessment is a recent LCA (2020) but has not been considered as the nearest landscape character area is approximately 2km to the north.

- National Character Assessment: NCA 128 South Hampshire Lowlands
- Hampshire County Integrated Character Assessment; LCA Forest of Bere East
- Havant Borough Townscape, Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment (2007); LCA 11 A3 (M) Eastern Corridor

2.5. Summary

2.5.1. The key implications of the above policies, assessments and guidance have been considered further in relation to landscape and visual aspects in the following sections 3-4.

Figure 2 - Site location - detailed context



3. Landscape elements, qualities, functions and character

3.1. Methodology

3.1.1. The landscape elements, qualities, functions, and character of the site and its wider area are described in the table set out in Appendix 3 and summarised below. These form the landscape baseline evidence which both informs the development proposals and, where likely to be affected by the development, form the landscape receptors against which the proposals are assessed. The sensitivity of landscape receptors is established by combining judgements on value with those on susceptibility to the type of change proposed, in line with the methodology set out in Appendix 1.

3.2. General description of existing site and setting (see photos in Figure 3)

3.2.1. Dunsbury Park is a business park with some plots already developed and some vacant plots including plots 100, 400 and 600 (as shown in Figure 2) which are the subject of this outline planning application. The residential area of Waterlooville lies to the west of the site, while the Leigh Park estate lies to the east. Open countryside consisting of blocks of woodland and agricultural fields lie to the north of the site. There is a further area of woodland and agricultural fields to the south of the site, with superstores located further south on Purbrook Way.

3.2.2. The site areas comprises comprises two areas: one to the south of Fitzwygram Way (unit 100) and the other 2 on the east and west sides of Park Lane (unit 400 and units 600 and 601 to the east). The plots are currently vacant and consists of a mix of hardscaped surfaces, greenfield areas, and some existing built structures.

3.2.3. Plot 100 is bounded by woodland to the east and south, with Fitzwygram Way wrapping around the west and north. Plot 400 lies north of an already developed plot with open ground to the north beyond a tree belt. Further built unites line the western edge of plot 400 separated by a line of trees, and the eastern edge is formed by the wooded Park Lane public footpath. Plot 600 lies east of Park Lane and extends north to a public footpath and tree belt which forms its northern boundary. The eastern edge is formed by woodland.

3.2.4. Fitzwygram Way which forms the main access to Dunsbury Park and will serve all the plots under this application, was constructed several years ago to create the framework for the park. It has a strong landscape framework with wide grass verges, avenue trees, pedestrian footpaths and drainage ditches.

Figure 3 - Site photos

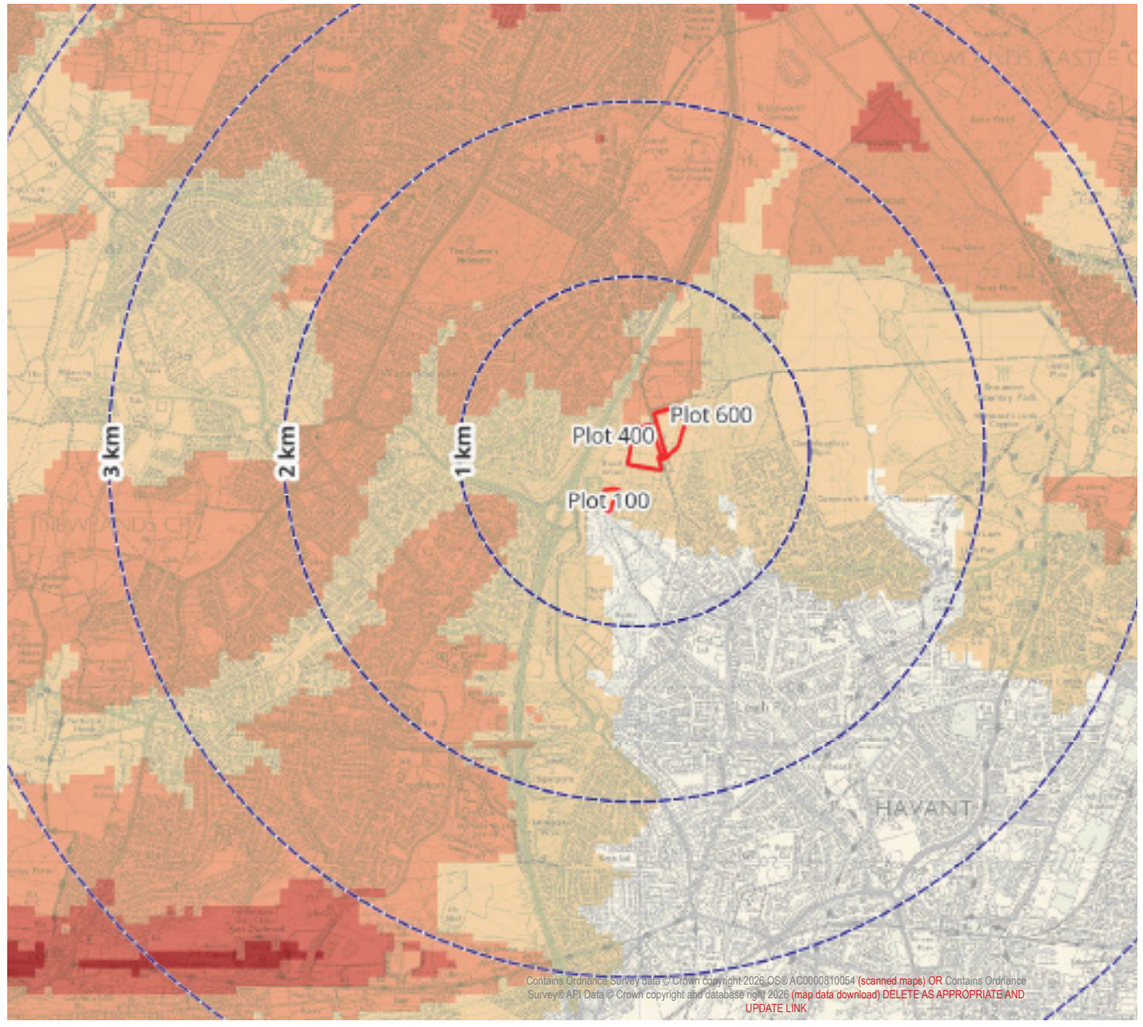
Plot 100, looking south. The site comprises areas of hard-standing, fenced with security fencing.

Looking east along Fitzwygram Way. Plots 400 and 600 lie beyond the building.

Looking north to plot 400 which lies between the white and grey building and the trees to the right. The trees mark the route of Park Lane public right of way. Plot 400 comprises areas of partly vegetated spoil.

View south across plot 600 which is surrounded by tree belts and woodland with the wooded corridor of Park Lane to the right. Housing at the northern edge of Leigh Park is not visible beyond the trees. The site itself is grassland.

Figure 4 - Topography



3.3. Topography

3.3.1. The site lies south of the South Downs ridge within an undulating landscape falling gently southwards.

3.3.2. Plot 100 is a man-made plateau which appears largely flat, but falling gradually in one plane from north to south over a total of approximately 1.5 m. The channel of the restored Hermitage Stream lies to the south-west and the attenuation basin to the west.

3.3.3. Plot 400 is made up of undulating spoil deposits and a series of plateaux with steep banks. The levels fall from 41.50m in the north-east corner to 38.00 in the north-west corner, and from the northern boundary to the southern edge the level changes overall by 6-8m. South of the southern boundary there is a further steep bank dropping another 2m.

3.3.4. Plot 600 falls from north to south over a total of approximately 9 m and gently undulating from the centre to the west and more steeply to the eastern edge following the natural landform which reflects the wider landscape.

3.3.5. The value of the natural landform of plot 600 is judged to be of community value, being representative of the local character. The man-made landform of plots 100 and 400 are of low value.

3.3.6. The susceptibility of plot 600's natural landform to the type of development proposed is high, due to the likely need for creating level platforms for the large footprint buildings and service areas, with possible need for extensive retaining walls.

3.3.7. Combining the community value and the high susceptibility, the natural landform of plot 600 has a high/medium sensitivity.

3.4. Hydrology

3.4.1. Hermitage Stream runs south of plot 100 with a naturalised section running beneath the road bridge and turning south which was constructed as part of the installation of road infrastructure for the park. An attenuation basin lies west of plot 100 fed by open swales running parallel with Fitzwygram Way.

3.4.2. A small stream runs north south within woodland a few hundred metres from the eastern edge of plot 600 and is unlikely to be affected. There are no hydrological features within any of the plots which would be affected by the proposed development and which are of landscape concern. The hydrological function and quality of the site and the nearby water courses are covered elsewhere in the application.

3.5. Vegetation

3.5.1. Plot 600 is currently unmodified and unmanaged grassland with a single oak tree in the centre, surrounded by bramble scrub. Broadleaf woodland is adjacent to the east and a tree belt / hedgerow along the northern boundary and western edge (route of Park Lane). A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for plot 600 by Greengage accompanies this report. Several ecological enhancements recommended:

- New hedgerows to favour native species and be species-rich (more than five species) where possible. Where a single species is more appropriate, a single native species such as hazel Corylus avellana beech Fagus sylvatica or hornbeam Carpinus betulus should ideally be favoured.
- Biodiverse green roof and green walls (ground based or facade bound)
- Shrub and tree planting including native berry producing and pollinating species as well as night-scented planting
- Scrub planting to create a buffer / transition from grassland to woodland
- Bat boxes, bird boxes, bee bricks, insect hotels, bee posts
- Wildflower friendly planting

3.5.2. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for plots 100 and 400 by Eight Versa accompanies this report. Plot 400 comprises made up ground and spoil heaps with regenerating open mosaic habitat which is of principal, county level importance. The western edge

is formed of trees and hedgerow and the eastern side by the wooded corridor of Park Lane. Further surveys are recommended for bats, dormouse and reptiles. A number of soft landscape recommendations have been made:

- Incorporation of wildflower and amenity grassland mixes to boost invertebrate diversity.
- Native tree and shrub planting underplanted with species such as primrose and bluebell to provide structure and seasonal resources.
- Inclusion of biodiverse green roofs where possible, using seed mixes with high pollinator value.
- Retention and enhancement of boundary woodland/scrub with gapping-up and sensitive long-term management.

3.5.3. Plot 100 is bare earth with the naturalised attenuation pond to the west and ancient woodland to the south.

3.5.4. A tree survey has been carried out by Barrell Trees on plot 400. This identifies a number of category A and B oak trees around the site boundaries, mostly to the eastern side along Park Lane. Tyler Grange have produced tree surveys for plot 100 and plot 600. Plot 100 has seven individual trees all of either high or moderate value, one large high value group, one moderate value group and two low value groups. All these trees were located offsite behind palisade fencing and none will be removed to facilitate the development. The survey for plot 600 identified a mix of trees, groups and hedgerows which range from large individuals providing high arboricultural value to areas of low value young self-seeded trees and scrub. The majority of the trees are located on the peripheries of the site or offsite. Only one low value category C group is located internally at the centre of the site.

3.5.5. The value of the site's vegetation in ecological terms is covered by the ecologists. In landscape terms the mature oaks and thick hedgerows along Park Lane and around the boundaries of plots 400 and 600 which are key characteristics of the wider landscape and important in the setting of the Park Lane PRoW are judged to be of local authority value as are the woodlands south of plot 100 and west of plot 600.

3.5.6. The susceptibility of the site's vegetation to the type of development proposed is high due to the likely need for creating level platforms for the large buildings and service areas.

3.5.7. Combining the local authority value and the high susceptibility, the site's vegetation comprising the mature trees and hedgerows around plots 400 and 600 and along Park Lane has a high sensitivity.

3.6. Pattern of landscape and settlement

3.6.1. Dunsbury Park sits within a gap between the urban areas of Havant to the east and south and Waterlooville to the west, beyond the A3 (M). The park's development area sits within the framework of woodland which is retained to the south and north-east, as well as along the east side of the A3 (M).

3.6.2. The straight routes of the Park Lane PRoW and the east offshoot running along the north edge of plot 600 are historic routes in existed since at least the early 19th century but beyond this the historic pattern of the landscape and settlement has been lost due to the A3(M) and the business park.

3.6.3. The value of the pattern of PRoWs is judged to be of community value.

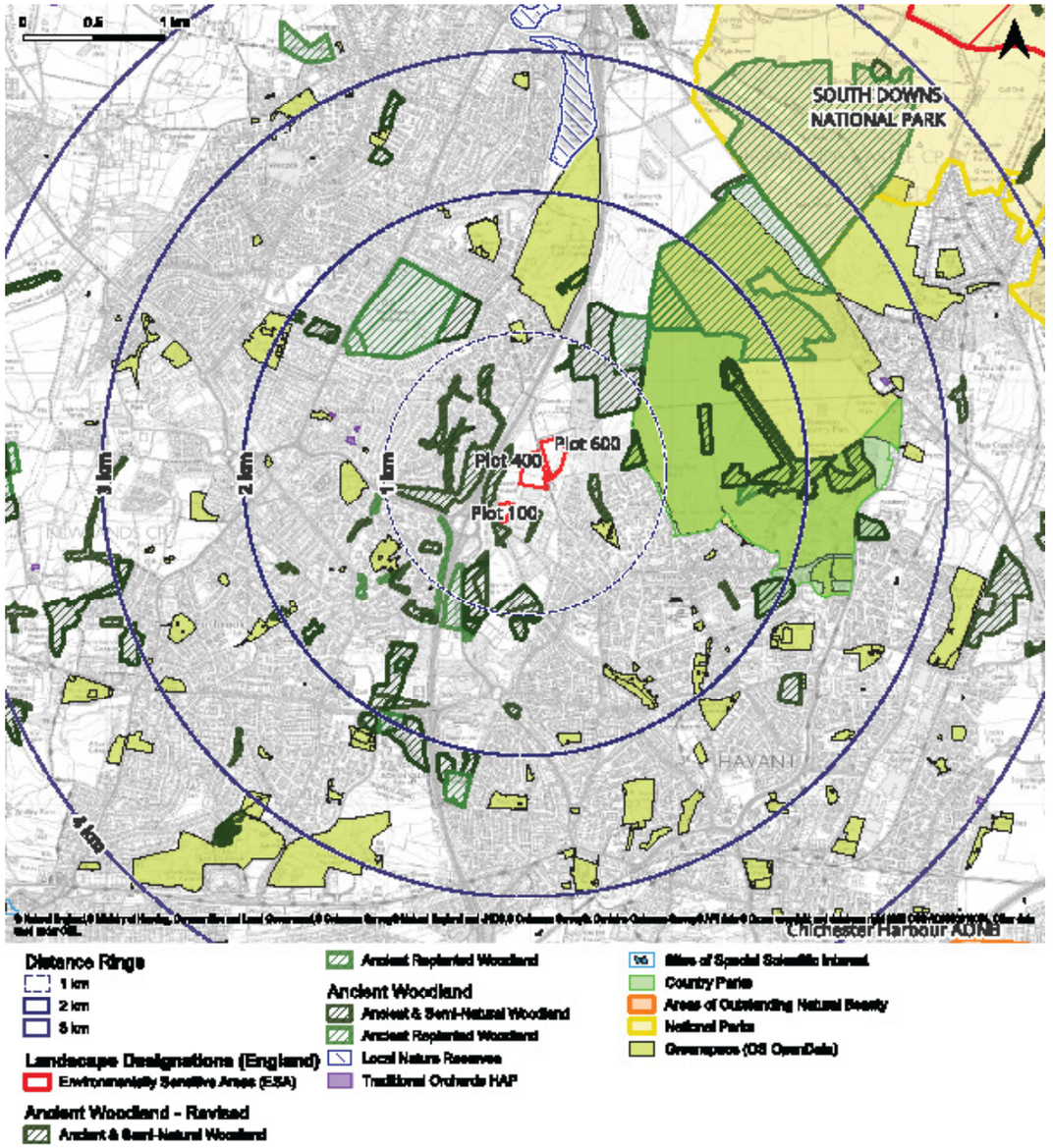
3.6.4. The susceptibility of the landscape pattern of PRoWs to the type of development proposed is medium; routes form the framework and boundaries to the development plots and therefore able to be accommodated.

3.6.5. Combining the community value and the medium susceptibility, the pattern of the PRoWs has a medium sensitivity.

3.7. Access and recreation

3.7.1. Park Lane PRoW bisects the wider site area running between plot 400 and plot 600. A branch eastwards off of Park Lane forms

Figure 5 - Vegetation and biodiversity



the northern edge of plot 600 linking to Bells Copse and Havant Thicket Reservoir area the future public access area due to open 2031. Bells Copse to north-east is open access woodland which will not be impacted by the proposed development. To the south of plot 100 there are footpaths within woodland, not accessible from the site and which will not be affected by the proposed development.

3.7.2. The value of the site's public access is therefore related to the 2 public footpaths - Park Lane (PRoW 108/123/2-4) and the eastern offshoot (PRoW 108/120/1). They are judged to be of local authority value as local footpaths.

3.7.3. The susceptibility of the public footpath routes to the type of development proposed is high/medium; it is possible to accommodate proposed type of change without affecting the route of the eastern offshoot but the route of Park Lane could be affected. Note that views from the PRoWs will be covered in section 4.

3.7.4. Combining the local authority value and the high/medium susceptibility, on balance the public access routes have a high/medium sensitivity.

3.8. Perceptual qualities

3.8.1. West of Park Lane the character is urban / industrial with the large buildings, road, car parks, security fencing, lighting, noise from the A3 and power lines / pylons with no sense of tranquillity.

3.8.2. The setting of the Park Lane PRoW and the footpath heading east is contained by trees and hedges with few gaps and has a sense of rurality.

3.8.3. Plot 600 to the east of Park Lane has a more rural feel and greater sense of tranquillity created by the natural grassland and being surrounded by trees.

3.8.4. From the higher ground in plot 600 and plot 400 there are glimpsed views towards the Solent through occasional gaps in middle ground trees.

3.8.5. The value of the perceptual qualities of the site west of Park Lane is low. Park Lane and plot 600 have a higher perceptual value with greater rurality and tranquillity, less urban influence, and therefore judged to be of community value.

3.8.6. The susceptibility to the type of development proposed of the sense of rurality and tranquillity of Park Lane and plot 600 is high; the proposed change of use and introduction of a road link across Park Lane will be difficult to accommodate without undue consequences to the baseline situation.

3.8.7. Combining the community value and the high susceptibility, the positive perceptual qualities of Park Lane and plot 600 have a high/medium sensitivity.

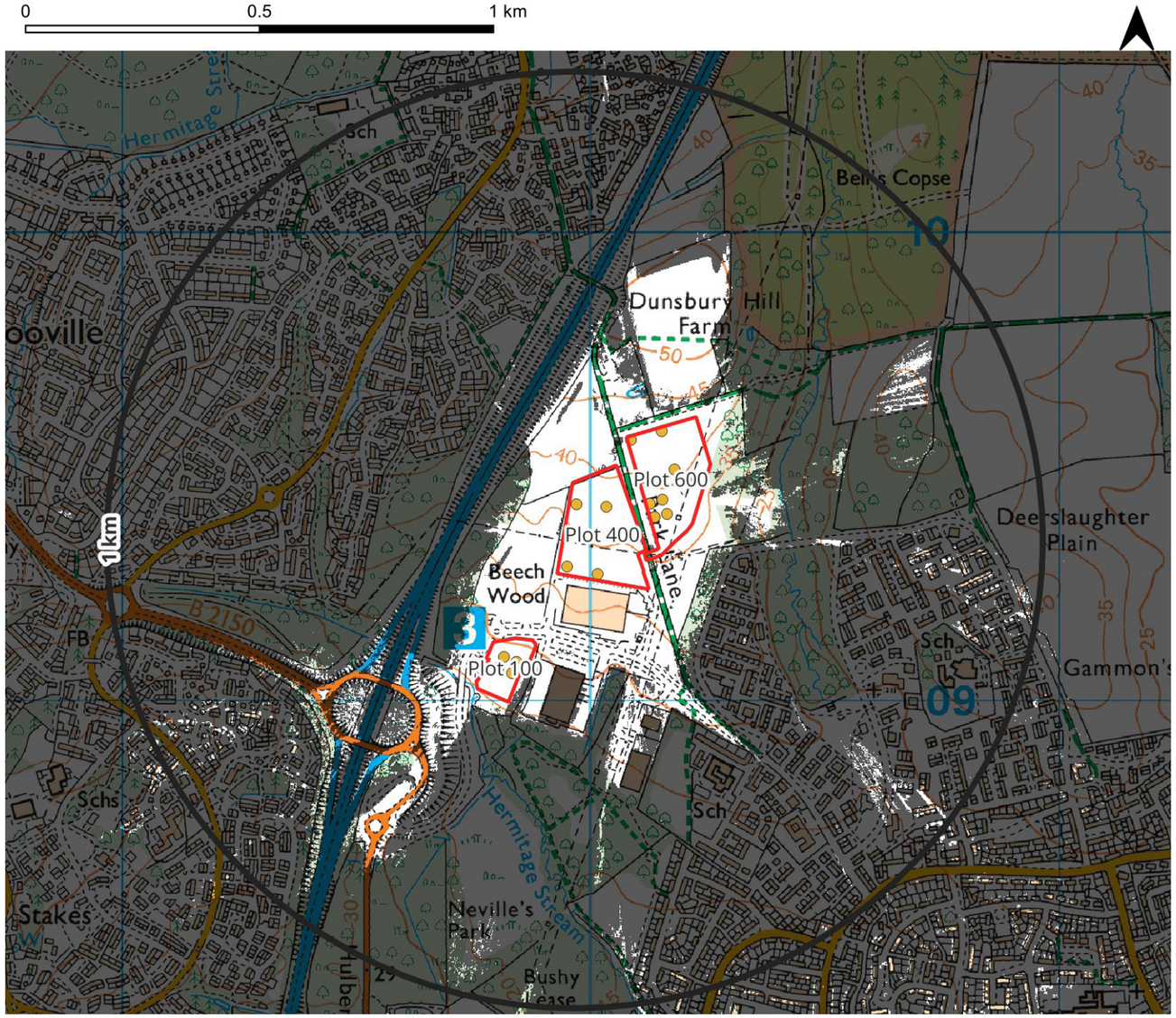
3.9. Summary of landscape receptors

3.9.1. The following table (Figure 6) comprises a summary of the previous sections setting out landscape receptors where they are likely to be adversely affected by the proposed development and are of medium sensitivity and greater. These are the particular landscape receptors which will be considered further in the appraisal of effects, Volume 2.

Figure 6 - Summary of Landscape Receptor Sensitivity

Landscape Receptor	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Topography (Plot 600's natural landform)	community	high	high / medium
Vegetation (mature oaks and hedges plots 400 and 600)	local authority	high	high
Pattern of landscape and settlement (PRoW routes)	community	medium	medium
Access and recreation (PRoWs)	local authority	high / medium	high / medium
Perceptual qualities (rurality and tranquility of plot 600 and Park Lane)	community	high / medium	high / medium

Figure 7 - Zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) based on LIDAR data (1km radius from site)



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Plot Boundaries

ZTV LIDAR

Development unlikely to be visible

Development potentially visible

IMPORTANT:

This computer generated model is based on a LIDAR DSM dataset which takes into account the buildings and vegetation in the area.

The ZTV diagram is theoretical, for use only as a starting point to inform potential areas to be tested in the field. As such, the ZTV is potentially misleading and actual visibility may be proven to be considerably different through fieldwork.

This diagram was created with a building ridge height of 15m, and a viewer height of 1.65m

4. Views

4.1. Methodology

4.1.1. The visibility of the site is influenced by the topography of the surrounding area and the presence of features such as buildings and vegetation. The map showing the zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) in Figure 7 is based on LIDAR data which is a 3D representation of land that includes trees, woodland cover and built form. Building on the scope of the previous Park Lane Visual Framework document the ZTV is used to further guide fieldwork, confirming areas where the likely proposed development would be screened by landform. The visual study zone has been limited to 1 km, beyond which views are unlikely to be affected. Informed by the ZTV and prior to undertaking viewpoint photography in the wider landscape, the site was visited in order to assess what is visible from eye level including likely views from private houses.

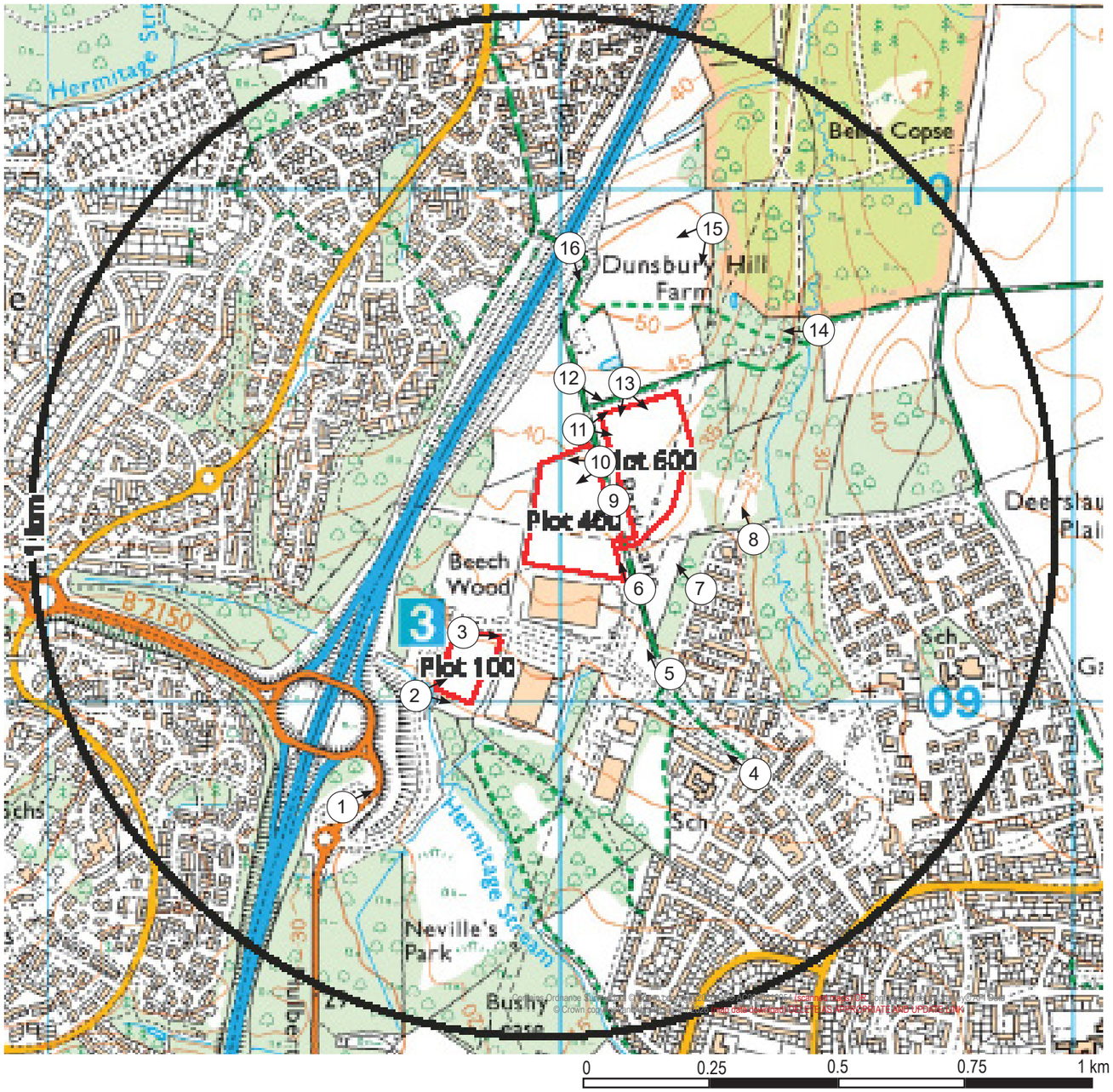
4.1.2. Figure 8 indicates the location of photographic viewpoints. Figures 9 to 24 set out photographs annotated to describe the distance of the viewpoint from the site, the direction of the view, the nature of the viewpoint, type and relative numbers of visual receptors and the visibility of the existing site. Views of a similar nature which are likely to be affected by the development, are grouped together below and an overall assessment of the sensitivity of the view receptors is made by combining judgements on value with those on susceptibility to the type of change proposed, in line with the methodology set out in Appendix 1. These view receptors form the visual receptors against which the proposals are assessed. The potential visibility of the proposed development and any seasonal changes to that visibility are also described next to each photograph and this informs the emerging development proposals. Viewpoints with no existing or potential view of the site are not considered further. Viewpoints represent as wide a range of situations as possible within the area of possible visibility as defined by the ZTV and field-verified, and include identified important views, sequential views along key routes, and views representative of a range of contexts and view receptors, at a range of distances and including key published viewpoints.

4.1.3. Verified views have been prepared by HCUK and these are included as Appendix 2 to LVA volume 2 and used to inform the appraisal of visual effects.

4.2. General description of visibility

4.2.1. Plot 100 is openly visible from the internal road (Fitzwygram Way) which is publically accessible. Plot 400 is largely screened from Fitzwygram Way by the building in front of it, but is visible intermittently from the Park Lane footpath where there are gaps in vegetation. Plot 600 is visually enclosed by vegetation but is visible intermittently from the Park Lane footpath passing along its western edge and the offshoot footpath on the northern boundary where there are gaps in vegetation. Views from houses and residential roads to the east are screened by woodland and tree belts.

Figure 8 - Viewpoint location diagram

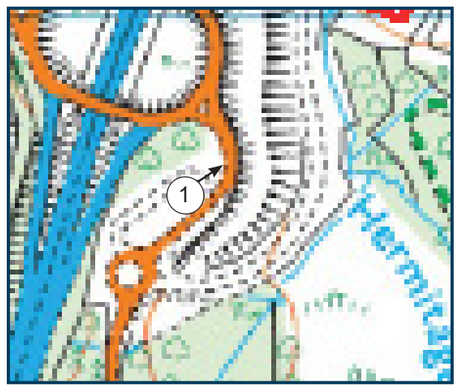


Key

Site boundary

Representative viewpoint with potential view of site or proposed development

Figure 9 - Photographic record of baseline conditions: Representative viewpoint 1



Viewpoint Data:

- Approximate distance from plot 400: 0.75km

Description
Looking north-east from layby off of B2150 near entrance to Dunsbury Park. The site sits at a lower level with layers of vegetation in between screening views.

Detractors

Highways signage and traffic

Receptors
The view would be visible by drivers stopped in the layby and on the road

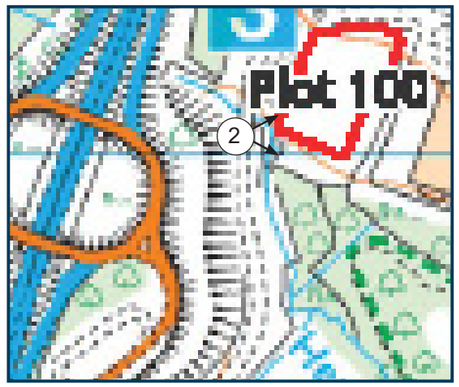
Seasonal visibility
In winter the vegetation would open up but views still unlikely due to multiple layers and difference in levels.

Value
Some value as a rest stop - at a community level

Susceptibility
Medium - view receptors have some interest in their surroundings

View Sensitivity
Low to medium sensitivity

Figure 10 - Photographic record of baseline conditions: Representative viewpoint 2



Viewpoint Data:

- Approximate distance from plot 400: 0.5km

Description
Looking north-east from Fitzwygram Way just south of where the Hermitage Stream crosses. Plot 100 is at the top of the bank in front of the buildings. Plot 400 lies behind the buildings with plot 600 further beyond that. The proposed building on plot 400 may be visible through the gap between the buildings.

Detractors

Highways signage, engineered bridge and road barriers, existing large scale buildings, and traffic

Receptors
The view would be visible by drivers entering the business park

Seasonal visibility
No seasonal change

Value
Low value

Susceptibility
Low - view receptors have little interest in their surroundings

View Sensitivity
Low sensitivity