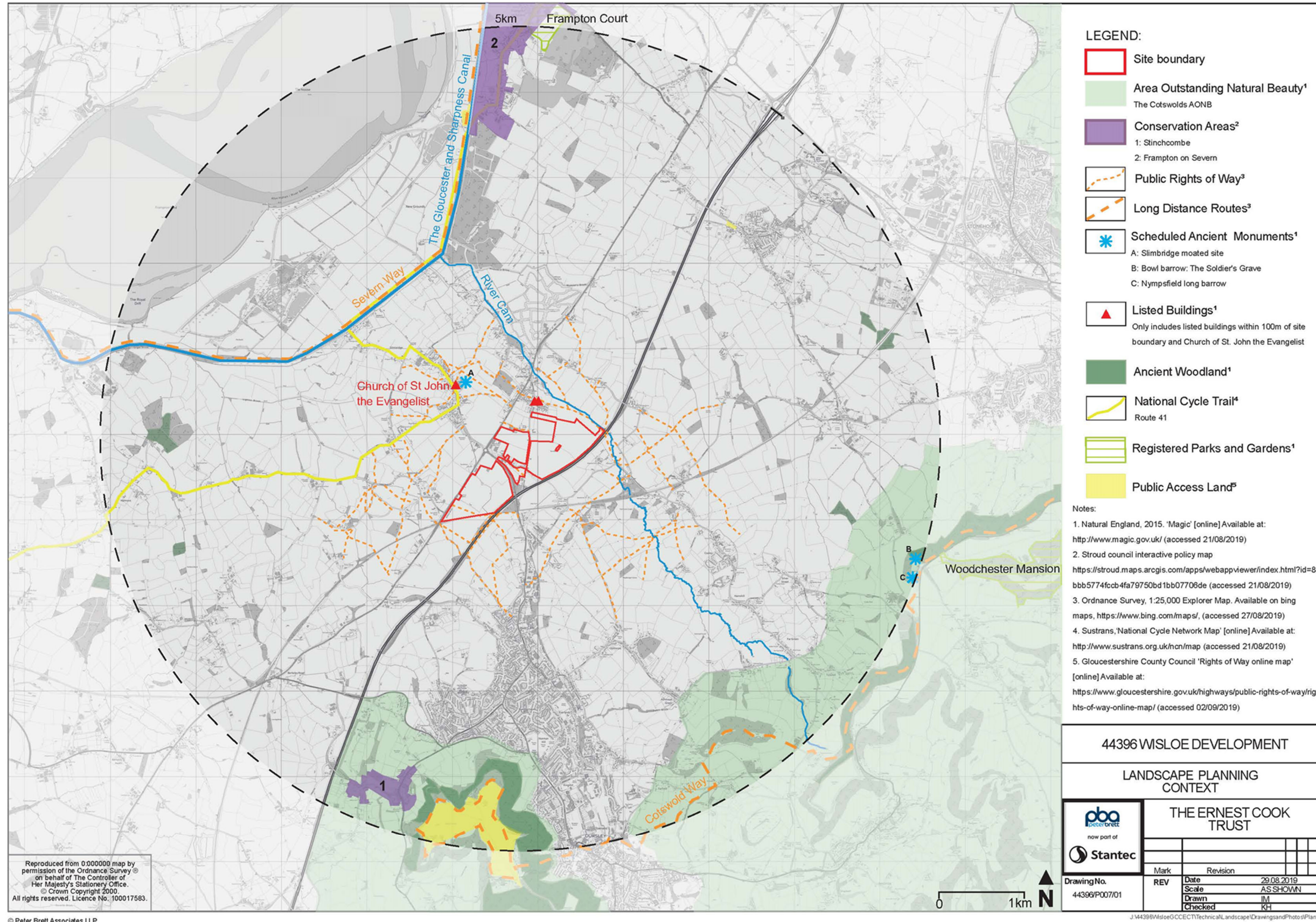


Figure L1: Landscape Planning Context



Cotswolds AONB: Vision & Special Qualities

As noted above, the Site lies beyond the Cotswolds AONB. The Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2018-2023 sets out a vision for 2043:

“A distinctive, unique, accessible living landscape treasured for its diversity which is recognised by all for its wide-open views.”

The published Special Qualities of the Cotswolds AONB, include reference to views from and to the AONB, including:

- The Cotswolds escarpment, including views from and to the AONB;
- The high wolds, with key characteristics that include reference to ‘big’ skies and long-distance views;
- The tranquillity of the AONB area, being away from major sources of inappropriate noise, development, visual clutter and pollution; and
- The Cotswolds Way National Trail which passes through the AONB, which is afforded panoramic views from the higher landform, looking out across the lower lying Severn Vale landscape.

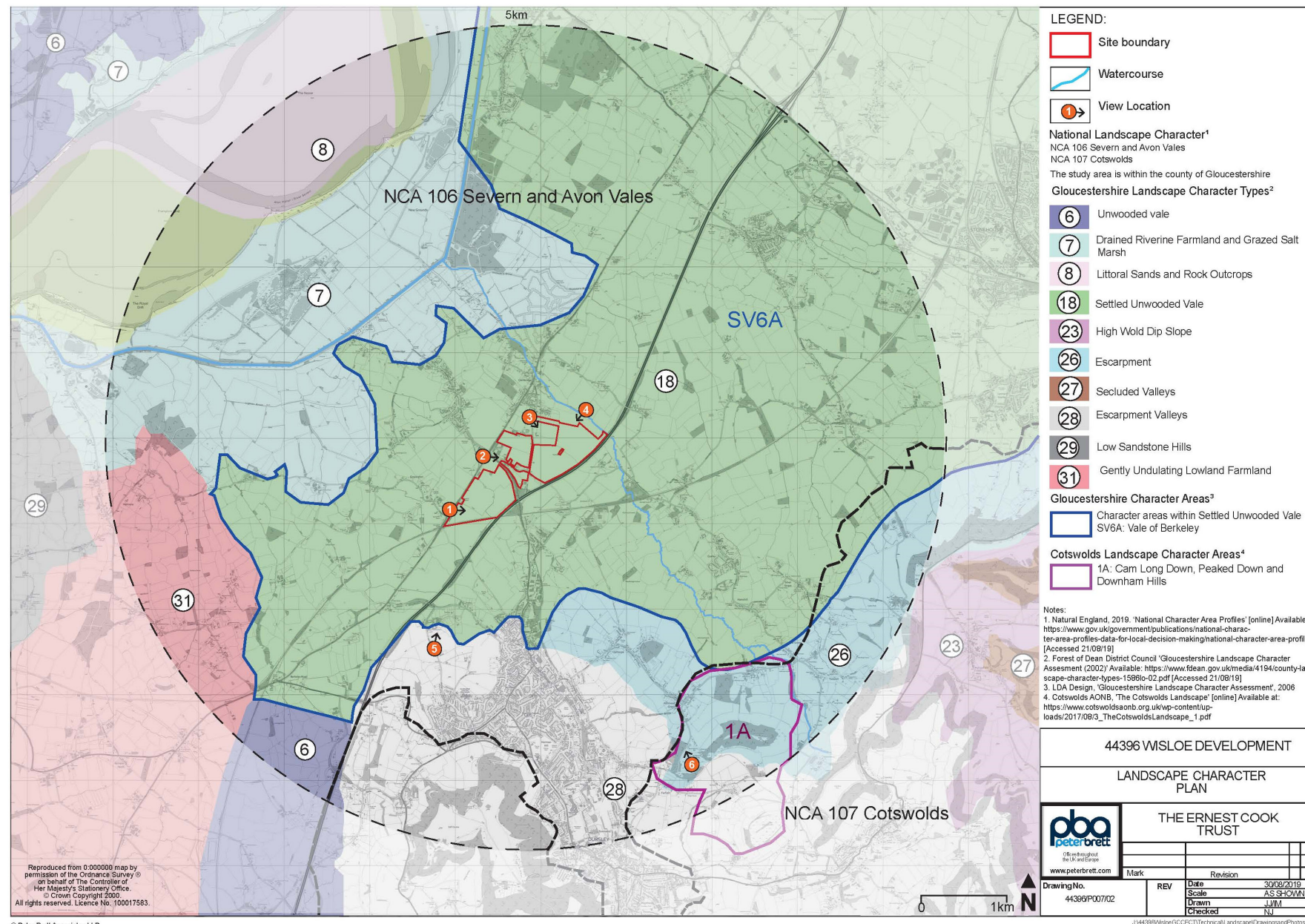
Landscape Character

In relation to national published Landscape Character Assessments, the Site lies within National Character Area Profile: 106 Severn and Avon Vales (NE336).

At the regional level, the Site lies within Landscape Character type: Settled Unwooded Vale, and Character Area: SV6A Vale of Berkeley (Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessment, by LDA on behalf of Gloucestershire County Council, January 2006). Key characteristics of relevance to the Site include:

- Soft, gently undulating to flat landscape;
- Area drained by series of east aligned tributaries of Severn, including the River Cam;
- Mixed arable and pastoral land use enclosed by hedgerow network;
- Limited woodland cover with mature hedgerow trees;
- Rural areas bordered by large urban and suburban areas and interspersed with commercial and industrial premises;
- Major transport corridors which pass through the Vale; and
- Widespread network of pylons and transmission lines.

Figure L2: Landscape Character



Visual Analysis

Baseline photographs taken during the visual survey, not agreed with the LPA but which represent people’s typical views towards the Site, are included in this section as extracts, and are set out in their full extents (A3 sheets) at **Appendix A** at the end of this LVTN.

The visual survey was conducted in summer, when trees and hedgerows were in full leaf. There is potential for the visibility of the Site to be greater during the winter, when there are no leaves on trees to filter views.

Local views:

There are few places which afford people open views across the entire Site; this being due to the almost flat landform and layers of existing vegetation of varying quality and thickness. People’s local views of the Site tend to be of different sections of the Site and are often partially screened or filtered by intermittent field boundary vegetation within the Site. There are local views of the Site from the roads that border the Site and which cross through the Site.

The Public Right of Way which crosses the southern tip of the Site, enables open views across the southern land parcel of the Site, although at the time of the visual survey this area was planted with maize which prevented clear views.

Views of the Site parcels situated to the north of the A4135 road are prevented in summer months by mature boundary hedgerow and hedgerow trees.

Along Wisloe Road within the southern sector of the Site, there are partial views into the adjacent fields. Looking north, people’s views are restricted to where there are gaps in boundary vegetation.

Dursley Road crosses through the Site, being to the north of the A4135 which also crosses the Site. People’s views from Dursley Road tend to be screened by the roadside hedgerows, which include hedgerow trees. There are views from the junction of Dursley Road with Wisloe Road, looking into the small parcel of land associated with farm buildings at Wisloe, where the hedge has been flailed.

A section of a Public Right of Way runs adjacent to the northern Site boundary which lies to the west of Dursley Road. Mature hedgerows with trees function to screen people’s views looking southwards into the Site from this section of Public Right of Way.



VP2 Extract: Junction with A4135 / Wisloe Road

Medium distance views:

There are no views towards the Site from the Church of St John the Evangelist at Slimbridge.

There are few, open or perceptible medium distance views from publicly accessible locations within the area surrounding the Site, as a result of the low-lying landform, intervening settlements / dwellings and the effects of the overlapping layers of hedgerows with trees, and occasional small copses.

From the Public Right of Way at Cambridge (represented by VP4), there are some partial views of the Site as a narrow horizontal strip in the mid-ground, however views into the rest of the Site are filtered by the intervening boundary vegetation.

Long Distance Views:

From Cam Peak and the Cotswold Way at Cam Long Down, within the Cotswolds AONB, there are extensive panoramic and open views across the Severn Valley. This long-distance view demonstrates the Severn Vale landscape, with areas of settlement including Cam and Dursley, and Ashmead Green, clearly seen on the low-lying valley floor and integrated into the wider landscape through being set amongst the network of small tree copses, and hedgerows with hedgerow trees. In this panoramic view, Stinchcombe Hill is seen to the left, rising above the vale landscape.

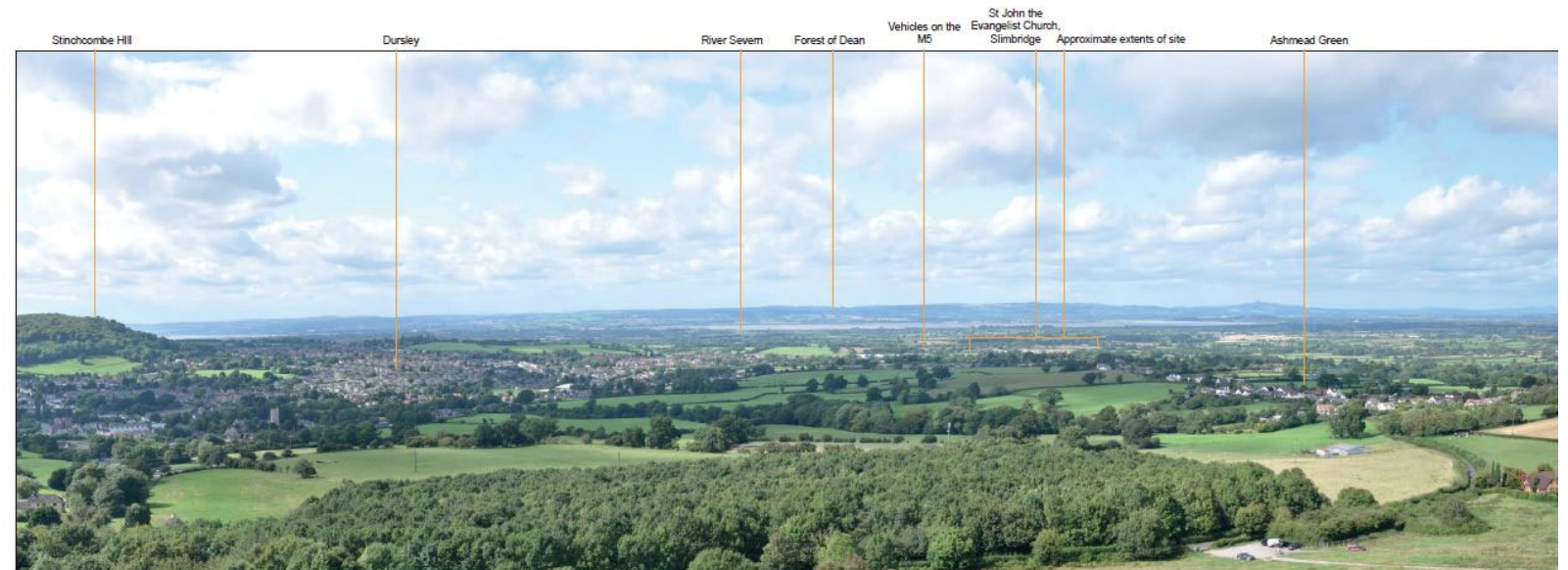
From this elevated location, the Site is perceptible as a small element within the wider landscape, with some parcels of the Site being screened from view.

The spire of the Church of St John the Evangelist at Slimbridge is a discernible landmark in the distance of this view, situated beyond the Site.

The major transport corridors of the M5 and A38, as seen from this location, are effectively screened through the use of embankments / cuttings and mature vegetation. In the far distance, the River Severn is perceptible, being framed by the landform on the opposite side of the river, at the Forest of Dean.



VP4 Extract: Public Right of Way, looking south-east to south-west



VP6 Extract: Public Right of Way on Cam Peak, looking west to north east

Landscape and Visual Opportunities and Constraints, and Green Infrastructure Principles

Landscape and Visual Opportunities and Constraints:

Opportunities:

- **Limited visibility** – the almost flat landform, with the overlapping layers of hedgerows with hedgerow trees, and areas of small copses in the landscape, combine to limit people’s views into the Site. There are local views of the Site from the Site’s boundaries and from roads adjacent to and within the Site.
- **Landscape structure** – Potential to enhance the Site’s green infrastructure / landscape framework and to integrate a strong green and blue infrastructure strategy as an inherent part of any proposed development; this being achieved through effective collaboration between landscape, ecology and hydrology designers.
- **SUDs** – Utilise the existing surface drainage patterns to create an integrated a sustainable urban drainage scheme that provides areas of landscape amenity, combined with improved biodiversity, and water management outcomes.
- **Biodiversity** – the Site has been primarily used for agricultural purposes, so there is scope for an integrated green infrastructure framework to enhance the biodiversity value of the Site.
- **Connections to the nearby River Cam corridor** – provide new links to provide access to the River Cam corridor and existing network of Public Rights of Way.
- **Medium landscape sensitivity of the Site** - situated between two major transport corridors, being free from landscape designations and within a settled landscape character.
- **Medium to low visual sensitivity of the Site** - situated between two major transport corridors, on low-lying and almost flat landform, and within a settled landscape which contains overlapping hedgerows with hedgerow trees and small copses; all of which combine to limit views of the Site.

Constraints:

- **Views from the Cotswold AONB** – it will be necessary to seek consultation and sensitively consider how the design of proposed mixed-use development may affect long-distance views from the Cotswolds AONB, and the potential for those visual effects to affect the visual aspects of the published special qualities of the AONB. Development proposals would need to have due regard to height and mass of proposed development, as seen in long distance views from the AONB, and including elevated views from the Cotswolds Way long-distance public footpath on the Cotswold Escarpment. Landmarks in the landscape, as seen in panoramic views from the AONB should not be obscured.
- **Landscape and Settlement Character of the Severn Vale** – proposed development would need to be sensitive to and in keeping with the landscape and settlement character of the Severn Vale. Built form mass should be set within and broken up by tree planting to help set proposed development within the wider landscape.
- **M5 & A38 Transport corridors** – development proposals would need to take account of the noise and visual disturbance associated with these roads.
- **River Cam** – proposed development areas should be kept away from the river corridor.

Recommended Landscape / Green Infrastructure Principles for Enhancement and Mitigation:

As a result of the previous landscape and visual analysis, the following landscape / green infrastructure principles for enhancement and mitigation are recommended with regard to proposed mixed-use development within the Site. These have been interpreted and presented on Figure L3: Landscape Visual Analysis and Concept Plan.

- Integrate green infrastructure as a core framework through the proposed development, in juxtaposition to the linear nature of the A38 and the M5 transport corridors. This approach would effectively break up the mass of new built form when seen in long-distance views from the Cotswolds AONB and help to assimilate new development into the wider landscape character and settlement pattern;
- Manage and enhance existing boundary vegetation;
- Keep development away from the River Cam;
- Incorporate a central landscape feature to assist with breaking up the mass of new built form, to be in keeping with the existing landscape and settlement character;
- Provision of areas of play within new open space, and new tree, hedgerow and copse planting in the green infrastructure framework; and
- Integrated SUDs, making effective use of the Site’s landform and surface drainage patterns, to provide sustainable drainage which also provides landscape and visual amenity and biodiversity enhancements;
- New planting within the Site, to include suitable native species, which are in keeping with the character of the area, and would enhance biodiversity;
- Create new public paths as part of the green infrastructure framework for the Site, and which would link to the existing Public Rights of Way Network in the surrounding area; and
- Use cut-off lighting and downward lighting to minimise adverse effects on tranquillity, dark night skies and light-sensitive wildlife.

Figure L3: Landscape Visual Analysis and Concept Plan



Summary and Conclusion

The Site comprises an area of land located between the A38 and M5 corridors, and is dissected by roads including the A4135, Dursley Road and Wisloe Road. It currently comprises small to medium scale agricultural fields. There are a number of hedgerow field boundaries within the Site, and which include hedgerow trees.

The Site has a medium landscape sensitivity and a medium to low visual sensitivity. It lies within a settled landscape character of the Severn Vale.

The River Cam is located to the north of the Site, but beyond the northern Site boundary.

The Cotswold AONB lies approximately 3.8km to the east of the Site. The Site can be seen in long-distance views from elevated views on the Cotswolds Escarpment, as part of the low-lying settled landscape.

The almost flat and low-lying landform, combined with the visual effect of overlapping layers of hedgerows with hedgerow trees, and areas of small copses in the landscape, effectively limit people’s views into the Site from locations other than the Site boundaries. There are few locations that enable views of the full area of the Site from any one location.

Proposed development at the Site is recommended to be set around an integrated green blue infrastructure framework, which would be in keeping with the existing landscape and settlement character and would help to break up the mass of new built form when seen from the wider landscape and long-distance views.

A series of green blue infrastructure principles have been recommended for inclusion as an inherent part of any proposed development.

It is therefore considered that sensitively designed mixed-use development, which incorporates the recommended landscape / green and blue infrastructure principles, including SUDs which effectively make use of the existing surface drainage patterns, could be successfully accommodated without causing undue harm to landscape features, landscape character, people’s views and visual amenity, or to people’s long-distance views from the Cotswolds AONB.



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