Upthorpe Road, Cam Landscape Appraisal







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1 Introduction and Purpose

Introduction

- 1.1 Incola Landscape Planning have been appointed by Terra Strategic to provide advice relating to landscape and visual matters in respect of the promotion of land off Upthorpe Road, Cam (the site) for residential development within the emerging Stroud District Local Plan Review.
- 1.2 This Landscape Appraisal a has been prepared to support representations being made to the pre-submission draft Local Plan Review and has informed the development of an illustrative masterplan that demonstrates how the land could successfully deliver residential development and associated infrastructure, public open space and multifunctional green and blue infrastructure that respects the landscape and visual context and setting of the Cotswolds AONB.
- 1.3 Land to the northeast of Cam, including beyond the river has been identified as a preferred location for growth in both the adopted Stroud District Local Plan and the emerging pre-submission draft Local Plan Review. The site location in relation to the settlement of Cam, adopted and draft allocations and the Cotswolds AONB is illustrated on the Site Location plan.
- 1.4 The site comprises 6 fields situated to the east of the River Cam and Rackleaze Nature Reserve, bounded by Upthorpe Road to the south and extending towards the western edge of Upthorpe on the hilltop to the east. Land use comprises arable fields on the lower-lying land to the west, with land managed as pasture / grazing on the steeper slopes that rise towards Upthorpe to the east. The northern boundary is formed by native hedgerows to field boundaries and distinctive mature oak trees, with a block of woodland and coniferous plantation on the higher ground on the edge of Upthorpe to the northeast.
- 1.5 The adopted allocation SA₃ lies to the north, beyond adjacent fields. As illustrated on the **Site Location** plan, the draft allocation PS₂₅ extends from the southern edge of SA₃ to cross the fields to the north of the site and run diagonally across the site.
- 1.6 This report considers the baseline conditions relating to the allocations northeast of Cam, the Cotswolds AONB and landscape evidence base that supports the emerging Local Plan Review, as well as the landscape and visual context and matters relating to the visual setting of the AONB.
- 1.7 Recommendations as to how the residential development of the site could be delivered are set out on **Development Opportunities** plan. These have been prepared to consider two potential access points into the site off Upthorpe Road to the south and southeast of the site respectively.
- 1.8 The analysis also contains annotated views from key vantages to demonstrate how the adopted (SA23) and draft (PS25) allocations will sit within the landscape context, along with the extent of the potential developable area identified within the assessment and opportunities identified.

1.9 Within this report, key summary points that have fed into the Development Opportunities are highlighted in **blue text**.



2 Baseline and Policy Context

2.1 As summarised above and illustrated on the **Site Location** plan, the land northeast of Cam, including that beyond the river, includes the Adopted Allocation SA₃ and Draft Allocation PS₂₅.

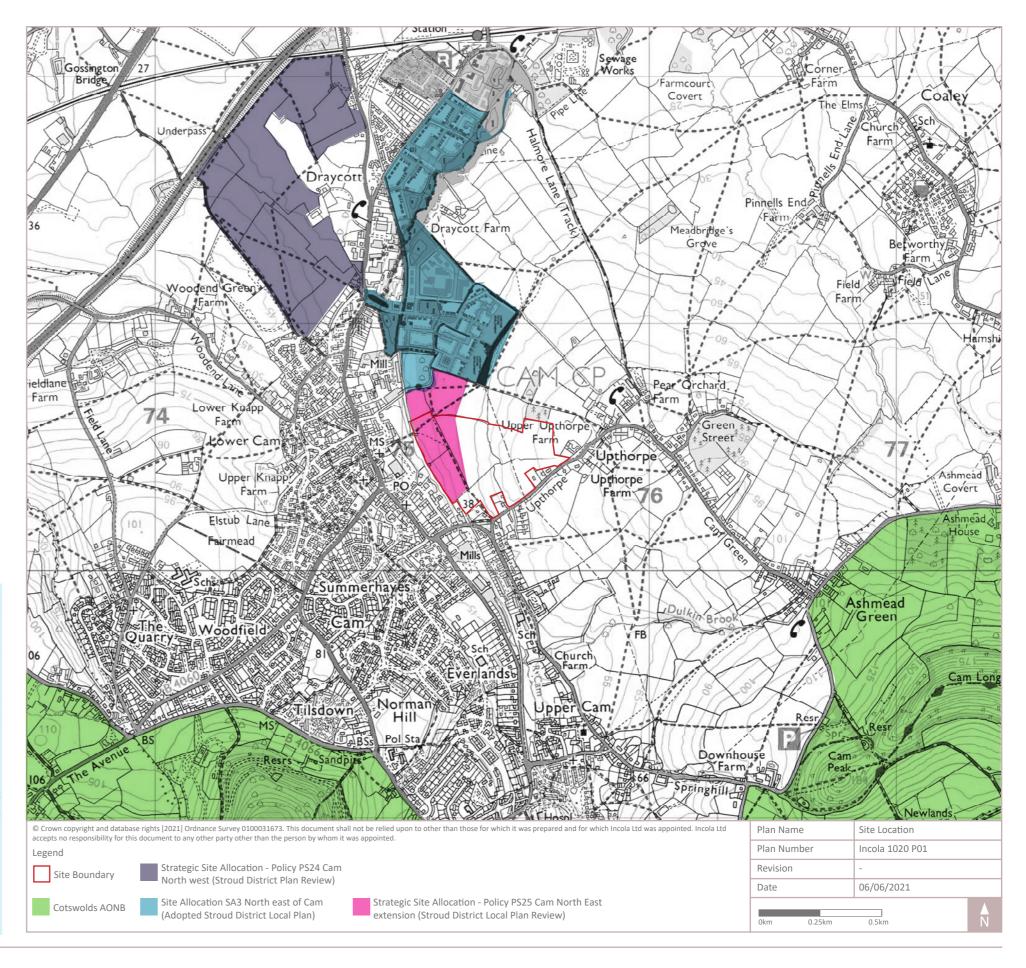
Northeast Cam Allocations

Adopted Allocation SA₃

- 2.2 When considering the baseline conditions, this appraisal has taken into account the land allocated in the adopted Local Plan Northeast of Cam (Site SA₃) for 450 dwellings, and 11.4 hectares of employment land that is currently under construction and partially complete.
- 2.3 SA3 also includes for areas of landscape mitigation and provision of green infrastructure, including a linear park along the River Cam and landscape buffers to the southeast of the development fronting the wider countryside and incorporating existing trees and hedgerows.
- 2.4 The development of the consented allocation will place the site within the built, urban context and associated landscape buffers and mitigation planting along the settlement edge fronting the countryside.

Draft Allocation PS25

- 2.5 In addition to the adopted land and development of SA₃, the area extending across the western site area and connecting with SA₃ to the north is also proposed for residential development in the pre-submission draft Local Plan Review.
- 2.6 Policy PS25 seeks to allocate land for 180 dwellings, as well as new accessible green space including structural landscape buffer incorporating existing and new native hedgerows and trees that link with existing green infrastructure.
- 2.7 As illustrated on the Site Location plan and other drawings within this report, it is important to note that Draft Allocation PS25 does not follow existing field boundaries but instead cuts across fields following a diagonal line that follows the contours of the lower slopes to the hillside below Upthorpe.
- 2.8 This approach is discordant with the pattern and extent of development as defined by Allocation SA₃ to the north which is defined by hedgerows and trees to field boundaries along the eastern boundary. This is illustrated on the **Site Context** and **Site Character and Features** plans at **Section 3**.
- 2.9 Furthermore, the policy requirements set out in PS25 for incorporating existing native hedgerows and trees within a structural landscape buffer cannot be achieved within the area defined as it does not allow for incorporation of the existing hedgerows that continue from SA3 to the north and run towards Upthorpe Road to the south.
- 2.10 A more logical approach would be to use field boundaries to define the allocated land and allow development and green infrastructure within these areas to respond to the landscape and visual context and constraints.





2 Baseline and Policy Context

Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

- 2.11 Whilst the site does not lie within the Cotswolds AONB, the settlement at Cam and Dursley and surrounding landscape is situated within the wider setting of the nationally designated landscape. There are views from within the site, town and surrounding landscape towards the distinctive landform of Stinchcombe Hill, 1km to the southwest beyond the settlement and the outliers of Cam Peak and Cam Long Down 1.5km to the southeast. The Cotswold escarpment lies 2.75km to the east, forming a distant backdrop in the wider landscape.
- 2.12 The extent of the AONB to the southwest and southeast of Cam, including: Stinchcombe Hill, Cam Peak and Cam Long Down are illustrated on the **Site Location** plan. Matters relating to the setting of the AONB are considered at **Section 5** of this report.

Stroud District Local Plan Review – Landscape Evidence Base

- 2.13 The Local Plan Review is supported by the following landscape evidence bas:
 - Cotswolds AONB Management Plan;
 - Stroud District Landscape Assessment ,2000; and
 - Stroud District Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, 2016
- 2.14 The site is situated within the 'Escarpment Foot Slopes' Landscape CharacterType (LCT) as identified by the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA). Land Parcels surrounding Cam, including those that cover the site and adjacent land have been assessed by the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (LSA). The LSA was prepared by the Council to support the Strategic Assessment of Land Availability and identifies where land adjacent to the main settlements within the District may be suitable for development to support the preferred direction for future growth in the Local Plan Review. The findings of the LCA and LSA as they relate to the site are considered below in Section 3.
- 2.15 The site is not situated within any areas designated for their landscape value or quality at either a national or local level.



3.1 The landscape context within which the site is situated on land to the northeast of Cam is illustrated on the **Site Context** plan. This includes the illustrative masterplan for the northeast Cam Allocation SA₃ and demonstrates the context within which the site is situated in relation to the new settlement edge that is to be established to the north of the site.

Topography

- 3.2 The topography forms a defining role in the settlement pattern and extent as well as the wider landscape setting of Cam and surrounding settlements. The **Topography** plan overleaf illustrates the situation of Cam on the valley sides northeast of Stinchcombe Hill. To the southeast the dramatic landform and distinctive features at Cam Peak and Cam Long Down form outliers to the Cotswolds Escarpment that rises beyond the vale and valleys to the east.
- 3.3 At a local scale, the land to the northeast of Cam beyond the river rises to the east and southeast, containing the land within the gently undulating, rising land of the foot slopes to the escarpment within the AONB. To the east of the site the land rises to a hill on the lower slopes of Cam Long Down, upon which sits the settlement of Upthorpe.
- 3.4 As illustrated on the **Site Character and Features** plan and examined in more detail within this report, the fields to the west of the site sit on the lower lying valley sides east of the river corridor, set below steeply sloping land to the east that rises towards Upthorpe on the hilltop.

Settlement Pattern

- 3.5 The settlement of Cam lies on the slopes of the river valley, extending towards Stinchcombe Hill to the southwest and along the valley to connect with Dursley to the south. Development east of the river corridor lies to the south of the site, with the allocated land to the north of the site within Allocation SA3 extending development east of the river to the northeast of the settlement.
- 3.6 The houses on Upthorpe Road, development on the edge of Cam, including industrial and commercial uses to the northwest of the site and prominence of houses on the rising valley side to the west place the site within the settlement edge and fringe landscape. The settlement pattern and Allocation SA₃ are illustrated on the **Site Context** plan.
- 3.7 Once developed, the allocated land at SA₃ to the north will further emphasise the settlement edge context within which the site is situated, extending to field boundaries on the slopes to east of the town.

Land Use

3.8 The site lies adjacent to the River Cam and former railway line to the western boundary, including the riparian vegetation, woodland and Rackleaze Nature Reserve that connects with Cam to the west.





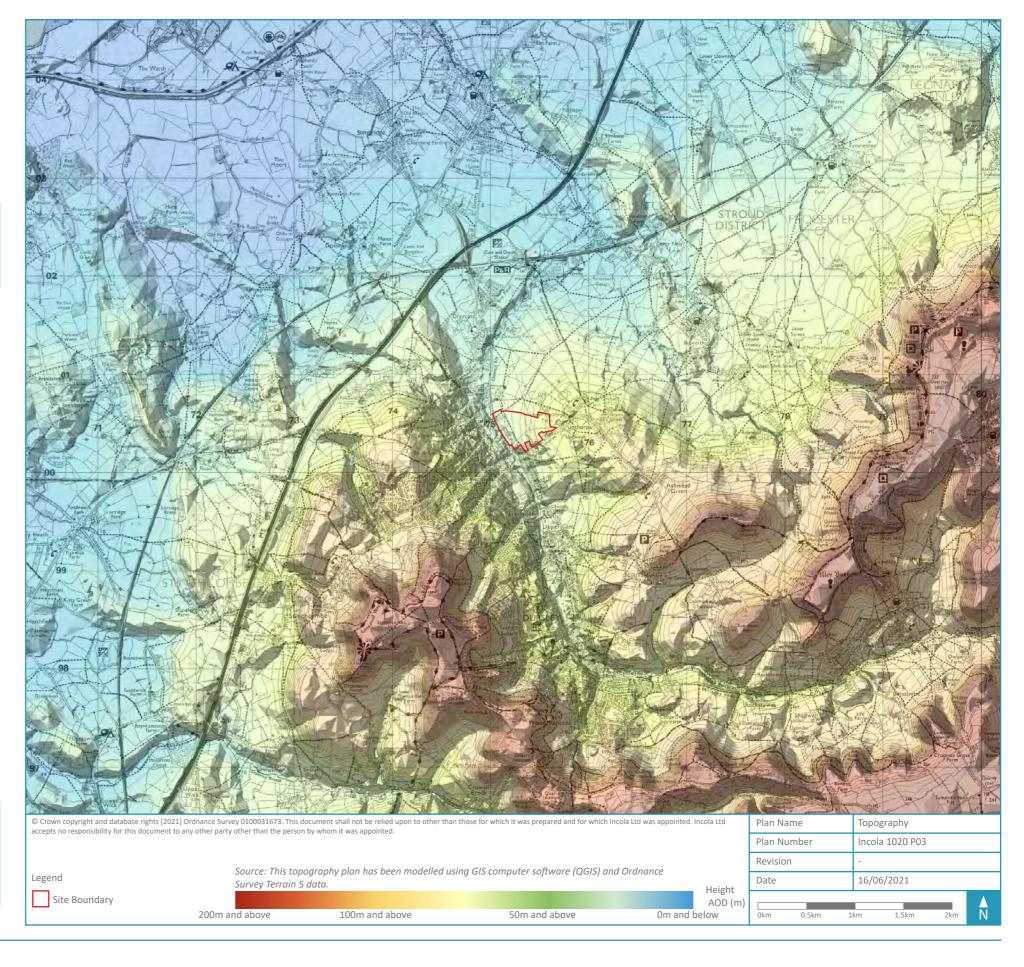
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- 3.9 The site comprises a mixture of arable fields on the lower slopes, with fields managed as pasture to the east where the land rises more steeply towards the village of Upthorpe that is stated on the hilltop to the east.
- 3.10 The fields are defined by native hedgerows, with distinctive mature hedgerow oak trees defining the northern site boundary and linking with tree belts and woodland on the hilltop and higher ground to the northeast of the site. The field pattern formed by hedgerows and trees, as well as the areas of woodland on the upper slopes to the northeast of the site are illustrated on the aerial image on the **Site Context** plan.
- 3.11 Upthorpe Road runs along the southern site boundary, with properties extending along the road from Cam to the west and Upthorpe to the east. The land to the west of the site lies within the easterly extent of houses on Upthorpe Road and Hopton Road on the eastern edge of Cam.

Stroud District Landscape Character Assessment

Escarpment Foots Slopes Landscape Character Type

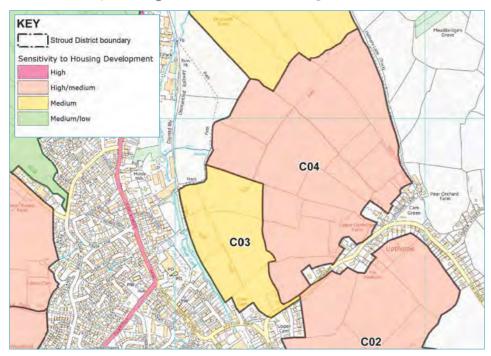
- 3.12 The site and land to the northeast of Cam is situated within the Escarpment Foot Slopes LCT. Key Characteristics of the area are identified by the LCA as including the following that are of particular relevance to the site and its context on the edge of Cam include:
 - Transitional, westward sloping fringe at the base of the Cotswold Escarpment – landform around Cam more dramatic and steeply sloping than other parts;
 - Dispersed pattern of isolated villages and hamlets, as well as parts of the settlement of Cam;
 - Pasture predominant land use with a strong pattern of small-scale fields enclosed by hedgerows;
 - Woodland includes small farm woods and small pear and apple orchards;
 - High hedgerows and undulating topography provide a strong sense of enclosure in parts. small farm woods and orchards contribute to a sense of enclosure;
 - Strong pattern of settlement, lands and field enclosure provide a recognisable network; and
 - Views to the steep Cotswold Escarpment that rises dramatically to the east provide a strong sense of place.
- 3.13 The LCA recognises the enclosure associated with the steeply sloping and undulating topography, combined with woodland, trees and hedgerows that provide a strong framework to smaller pasture fields. Orchards and small woodlands are characteristic of the area. The dispersed settlement pattern is also recognised as part of the landscape structure and character.





Stroud District Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

- 3.14 As illustrated on the extract from the LSA below, the assessment identifies two land parcels that cover the site area:
 - Land Parcel Co₃ includes the western part of the site on the lowerlying land, as well as the adjacent fields to the north.
 - The larger Land Parcel Co₄ extents to the edge of Upthorpe to the east and covers the higher slopes and hilltop, as well as land to the north of the site, including that within Allocation SA₃.



3.15 The findings of the LSA for each of these parcels are summarised below.

Land Parcel Co₃

- 3.16 The LSA assesses the parcels as being of a Medium landscape sensitivity and suitable to accommodate housing. This reflects the situation of the parcel on the lower-lying slopes and containment from Upthorpe by the intervening landform of the hill:
- 3.17 Key sensitivities identified by the LSA include the following:
 - Steep slopes to the east;
 - Contribution to separation between Cam and Upthorpe;
 - Contribution to the foot slope landscape in the context of the AONB;
 - Leisure use on Public Rights of Way; and
 - Mature riparian vegetation along the river and mature trees and hedgerows.

3.18 The assessment also identifies the soft green edge to the settlement. However, and as also recognised by the LSA, the development of the site under Allocation PS25 would change the settlement edge along the river corridor.

Land Parcel Co4

3.19 The LSA assesses the parcel as being of a **High / Medium landscape** sensitivity to housing, stating that:

"Housing development would be visible on these rising slopes, would significantly extend the settlement form, would reduce the separation of Upthorpe from Cam and would adversely affect the rural setting of rural settlement."

3.20 Key sensitivities identified by the LSA include the following:

- Location on the higher sloping valley sides visible from the west;
- Contribution to the separation between Cam and Upthorpe;
- Mature trees and hedgerows;
- Association with Public Right of Way on Halmore Lane;
- Contribution to the foot slope landscape in the context of the AONB;
 and
- Leisure use on Public Rights of Way.



Site Character and Features

- 3.21 The **Site Character and Features** plan illustrates the site on an aerial image, overlaid with the illustrative masterplan for the Allocation SA₃ to the north, Draft Allocation PS₂₅, public footpaths and contours.
- 3.22 The plan clearly shows the key features and matters as identified in both the Council's LCA and LSA and summarised above, including the situation of Upthorpe on the hilltop to the east and the extent of Allocation SA₃ to the north.

Landform

3.23 The highlighted contours emphasise the change in slope and steep land that rises to the east of the site on the pastoral fields. As illustrated on the **Photoviewpoints** at **Section 4**, the steeply sloping land contains the lower-lying land to the west of the site (as defined by LSA Land Parcel Co₃) and retains the physical and visual separation with Upthorpe.

Boundary Features

3.24 The mature hedgerow oak trees to the northern boundary that form distinctive features in the landscape are also clearly apparent, defining the filed pattern running west-east up the slopes. In contrast, the hedgerows that run north-south along the contours contain fewer trees and are gappy and low in places.

Public Rights of Way

3.25 Public Footpaths CCA₃6 and CCA₃7 cross the site, connecting with Cam to the west and Upthorpe Road to the south as well as the wider network of footpaths to the north and east that provide access to the wider countryside. Footpath CCA₃6 joins with the nature reserve, supermarket and high street to the west at the northern edge of the site, with Footpath CCA₃7 running north – south connecting other paths and Upthorpe Road.

Draft Allocation PS25

- 3.26 As illustrated on the **Site Character and Features** plan, Draft Allocation PS25 crosses fields within and to the north of the site and does not follow the existing field boundaries that define the fields on the lower-lying slopes, and which are contiguous with the eastern extent of Allocation SA3 to the north.
- 3.27 The planting of a strategic landscape buffer incorporating green infrastructure and vegetation along the boundary of PS25 would be incongruous and not allow for the incorporation of hedgerows and trees, nor the retained hedgerows and trees on the eastern boundary of adopted allocation SA3 to the north.
- 3.28 The approximate extent of Draft Allocation PS25 is illustrated on **Photoviewpoints 2 and 7** from public footpaths within and adjacent the site. This illustrates how the proposed allocation does not fit with the existing character, features and landscape structure.





Summary – Opportunities and Constraints

- 3.29 In response to the appraisal of the landscape context and the findings of the Council's Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, proposals for development of the site should ensure the following:
 - Limit development to lower lying land to the west of the site to avoid visual prominence and respect separation between Cam and Upthorpe;
 - Retain mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees to field boundaries;
 - Retain riparian corridor and woodland along the River Cam;
 - Opportunities to strengthen landscape structure through enhancement and planting of new hedgerows and hedgerow trees to reflect historic field pattern and reinforce enclosure in keeping with character of the Escarpment Foots Slopes landscape;
 - Opportunities to plant pear and apple orchards and manage land as pasture / grassland to reflect characteristic land use;
 - Retain visual connections with the AONB (escarpment, outliers and hills) to preserve sense of place; and
 - Retain and enhance accessibility and Public Rights of Way, connecting with wider countryside a d set within areas of green infrastructure.



Extent of Visibility

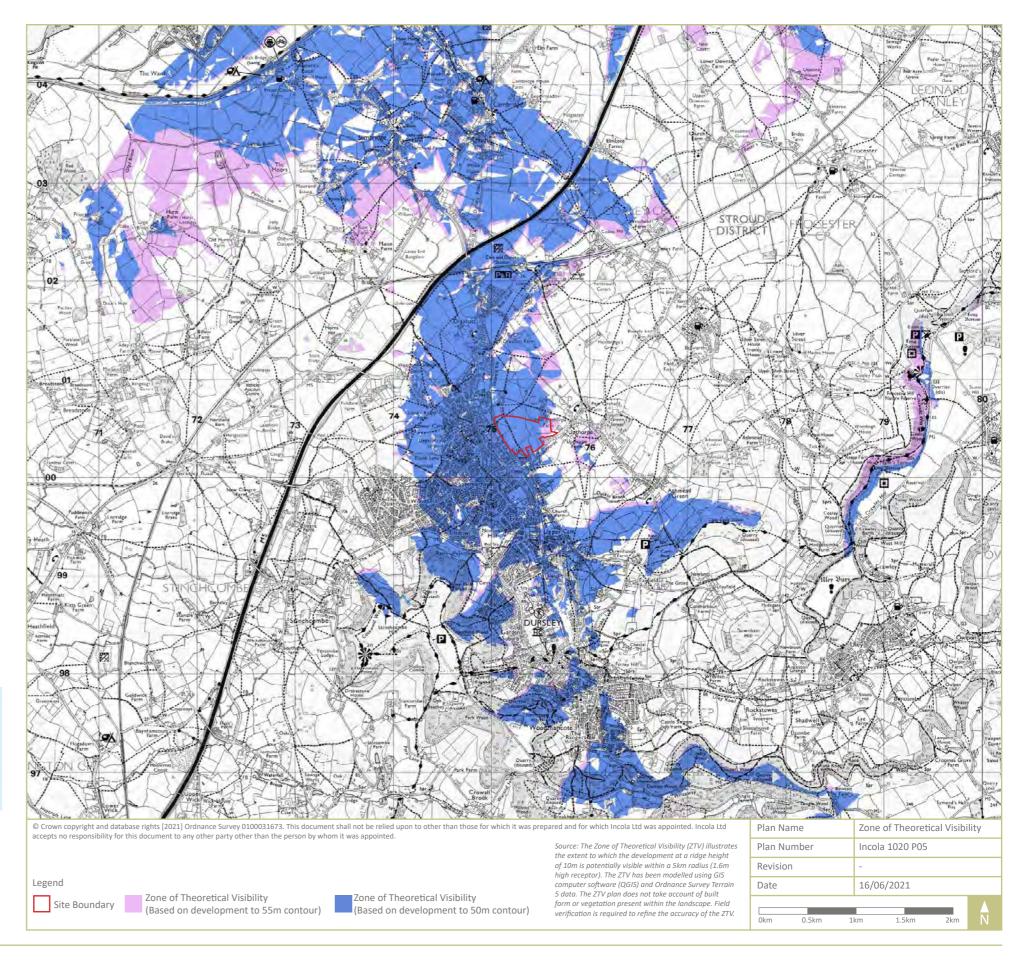
- 4.1 As illustrated on the **Topography** plan and set out above in relation to the landscape context, the landform within the area varies greatly, including the river valley and foot slopes to the outliers and Cotswolds Escarpment. The topography has a strong influence on the visibility of the site and development. Key sensitivities relate to the views to and from the Cotswolds AONB, as well as the separation between Cam and Upthorpe and the prominence of the site and development in cross-valley views from the higher land to the west of Cam.
- 4.2 As examined above when considering the site character and features, the steeply sloping land to the east of the site area serves to limit intervisibility between the lower lying parts of the site and Upthorpe which is situated on the hilltop to the east.

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

- 4.3 In order to determine the potential visibility of development upon the site, Incola Landscape Planning prepared Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTVs) assuming development of up to 1m AOD height within the site. This allows for development of two storey residential development.
- 4.4 Given the sensitivities associated with the separation between Cam and Upthorpe, the ZTV mapping was used to test the extent of development that may be contained on the site using contour heights.
- 4.5 As illustrated on the **Zone of Theoretical Visibility** plan, this included development extending to the 50m contour and the 55m contour. As the ZTVs show, 10m high development up to the 55m contour would not be visible from eye level (1.6m) on the edges of Upthorpe, with development limited to the 50m contour leading to a reduced ZTV which draws well back from the settlement edge.
- 4.6 The ZTVs were produced using bear earth modelling, which is based upon the terrain only, and does not take into account built for or vegetation cover. This has allowed the constraint posed by the landform to be tested as a worst-case scenario and assist in determining development parameters.
- 4.7 Two storey development of up to 10 metres in height situated on or below 50m AOD would retain the visual separation between Cam and Upthorpe. Given the potential for development up to the 55m contour to be visible from above eye level on the edge of Upthorpe, development above 50m (and below the 55m contour) should be reduced to a single storey in height to ensure visual separation between the settlements is retained.

Field Verified Visibility

4.8 Given the situation of the site adjacent to the existing settlement edge, including the wooded river corridor and the presence of trees, hedgerows and woodland within the wider landscape, the site and potential development on the lower lying land to the western site area is not visible from an area as extensive as the shown by the ZTV.





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4.9 The **Viewpoint Locations** plan shows the location of 13 representative Photoviewpoints that demonstrate the approximate extent of visibility of the site. This context within which the site is experienced in views from these locations is illustrated on **Photoviewpoints 1 -13** and described below.

Visual Context

Views from the North

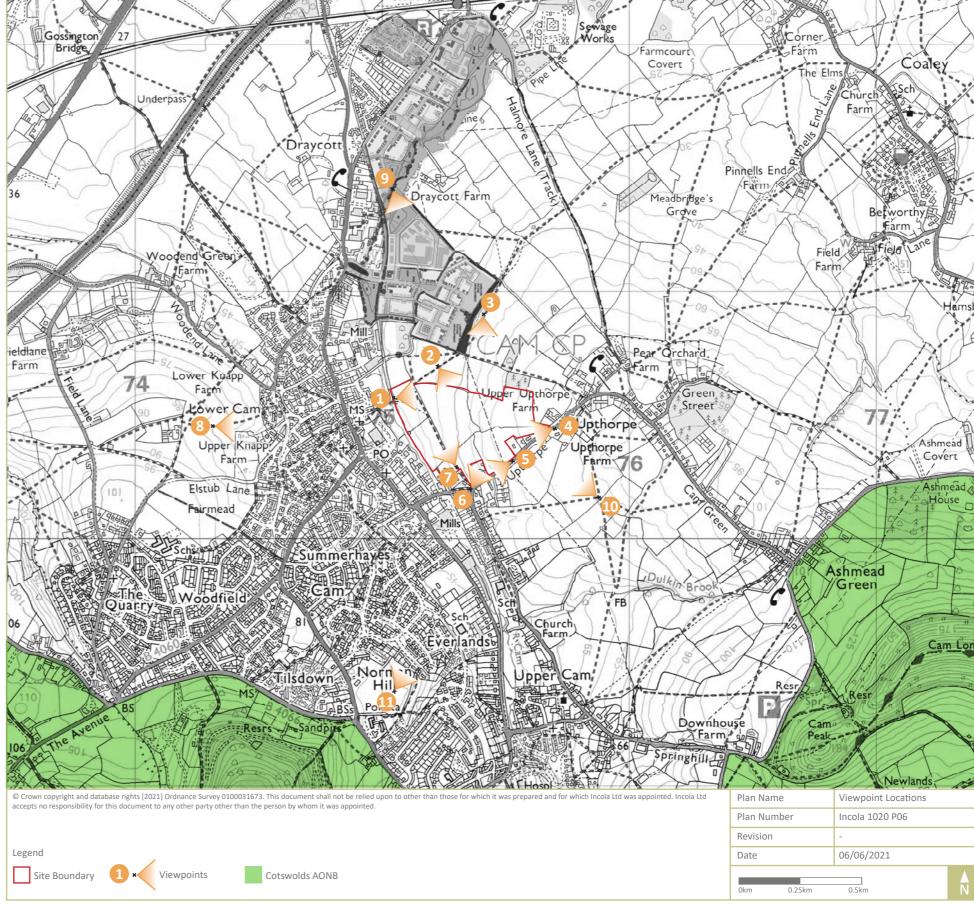
Local Views: Public Footpath CCA37

- 4.10 As illustrated by **Photoviewpoints 2 -3** there are local views towards the site from adjacent footpaths to the north, although views across the site are limited by the intervening trees, hedgerows and sloping landform.
- 4.11 Once Allocation SA3 is built-out, views of the site from beyond Photoviewpoint 3 will be largely screened by intervening built form and development, with localised views adjacent to and within the context of adjacent development. As illustrated on Photoviewpoint 2, draft allocation PS25 cross the fields and interrupts the route of the footpath in the foreground.

Wider Views: Public Footpath CCA28

4.12 As illustrated by **Photoviewpoint 9** from Public Footpath CCA28 adjacent to the River Cam, the hedgerows and trees to field boundaries and blocks of woodland within the landscape north of the site have a layering effect, filtering and screening views towards the site.







Views from the East

Local Views: Upthorpe Road

- 4.13 Given the topography and high hedgerows to Upthorpe Road, there are limited views into the site from the east. **Photoviewpoint** 4 shows views from the edge of Upthorpe to the eastern edge of the site at a field gate. Whilst there are views across the valley towards Cam and the higher ground in the foreground, the lower lying fields to the west are set below the landform and hidden from view.
- 4.14 There are no public footpaths within proximity of the site to the east with views into it.

Wider Views: Cotswolds Escarpment

4.15 As illustrated by **Photoviewpoint 13**, in distant elevated views from the Cotswold Escarpment to the east, the site sits set below development and the landform at Upthorpe. Development on the site would be indiscernible in these wider views.

Views from the South

Local Views:

- 4.16 Views into the site from Upthorpe Road to the southern boundary are limited by the tall hedgerows (**Photoviewpoints 5 and 6**). To the south of Upthorpe Road, whilst the houses, hedges and trees on the southern site boundary are visible on the skyline, views into the site are set beyond and screened from view.
- 4.17 As Public Footpath CCA37 enters the site there are views across the lower lying land to the north and northeast on the rising land towards Upthorpe (Photoviewpoint 6). Once built-out Allocation SA3 would be visible as a backdrop to the site in these views. Draft Allocation PS25 crosses the site in views from this location.

Wider Views: Cam Peak and Cam Long Down

4.18 Further afield, there are views towards the site in elevated panoramic vistas from Cam Peak across towards the escarpment, vale and Forest of Dean beyond. As illustrated by **Photoviewpoint 12**, in these views, the site is seen within the wider context of the edge of Cam, set beyond Upthorpe Road and against Allocation SA₃ to the north.

Views from the West

Local Views: Public Footpath CCA36

4.19 To the immediate west, views are screened by intervening vegetation and built form on the edge of Cam. There are views from Public Footpath CCA₃6 when entering the site from the nature reserve (**Photoviewpoint** 1) from where there are glimpsed views towards Cam Peak.

Middle Distance Views: Elevated land within and west of Cam

- 4.20 From the elevated land west of the town (**Photoviewpoint 8**), there are extensive views across the wider landscape towards the Cotswold Escarpment, Cam Long Down and Cam Peak.
- 4.21 Upthorpe sits on top of the foothill beyond the town, with the westerly slopes, including those within the site and adjacent land at Allocation SA3 forming a backdrop beyond the settlement. In views from this location, Allocation SA3 would wrap around the slopes to the north, defined by the hedgerows and trees to the boundaries, with Draft Allocation PS25 cutting across the fields to the south.
- 4.22 From within Cam on the higher slopes to the south west, there are views across the eastern valley side, with the site set amongst trees and hedgerows on the slopes below Upthorpe. This is illustrated by **Photoviewpoint 11** from the playing fields east of Tilsdown.

Wider Views: Stinchcombe Hill

4.23 Intervening vegetation, including coniferous tree belts and built form screen views from Stinchcombe Hill towards the site on the riding land to the southwest of Cam.

Summary – Opportunities and Constraints

- 4.24 As demonstrated by the ZTV analysis, by limiting development to the lower slopes to the west of the site below the 55m contour and within the existing field margins, the visual separation between Cam and Dursley will be retained. This also reflects the sensitivities and constraints identified in relation to the landscape character.
- that, beyond localised views from public footpaths within and adjacent to the site, views of the site are limited to those from elevated land beyond the town to the west and from within the town and open spaces to the southwest. There are also distant views towards the site from Cam Peak.
- 4.26 Those groups of people who may have views of development on the site and whose visual amenity may be affected include the following:
 - Resident of properties on Upthorpe Road adjacent to and directly overlooking the site;
 - Residents of properties in Cam overlooking the site from elevated areas on western valley sides;
 - Users of local public footpaths within and adjacent to the site (footpaths CCA₃6 and ₃₇);
 - Visitors to Cam Peak and Cam Long Down with elevated views across the wider landscape.
- 4.27 The following opportunities and constraints have been identified:
 - Limiting development to land to the west of the site below the 55m contour and as defined by the field boundaries;
 - Limiting development above 5om to single storey dwellings to ensure retention of visual separation with Upthorpe and properties on the higher land to the east;
 - Retention of views towards Cam Peak from within areas of open space and public rights of way within the site; and
 - Reinforcement of hedgerows and trees to site boundaries to soften the built edge and views of the development.
- 4.28 There are also opportunities to open up wider views from the higher ground to the east of the site within areas of publicly accessible open space. This is considered further rand illustrated by Viewpoint A in Section 6 of this report.





From Public Footpath CCA36 adjacent to western site boundary, looking east

Photoviewpoint 1



From Public Footpath CCA36 100m north of the site, looking south Cam North East Extension - Strategic Site Allocation PS25 (Stroud District Local Plan Review)

Photoviewpoint 2





From Public Footpath CCA36 275m north of the site, looking south North east of Cam Site Allocation - Policy SA3 (Adopted Stroud District Local Plan



Photoviewpoint 3



From Upthorpe Road at field entrance to eastern site boundary, looking west

Photoviewpoint 4





From Upthorpe Road adjacent to allotments, looking southwest

Photoviewpoint 5



From Upthorpe Road at field entrance to southern site boundary, looking Photoviewpoint 6 northeast



From Public Footpath CCA37 on southern site boundary, looking north Cam North East Extension - Strategic Site Allocation PS25 (Stroud District Local Plan Review)

Photoviewpoint 7





From Public footpath CCA41 on hillside west of Cam 780m west of the site, looking east Site Boundary



From Public Footpath CCA28 adjacent to River Cam 890m north of the site, looking south

Photoviewpoint 9





From Public Footpath CCA60 200m south of Upthorpe Road, looking north

Photoviewpoint 10

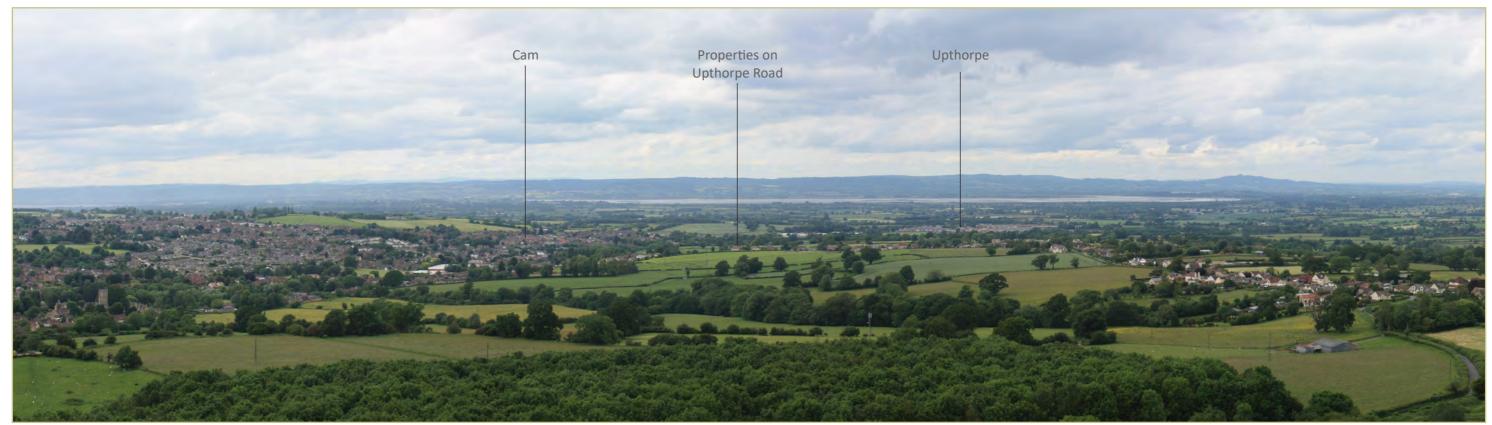


From playing fields off Tilsdown (A4135) 850m from the site, looking northeast

Site Boundary

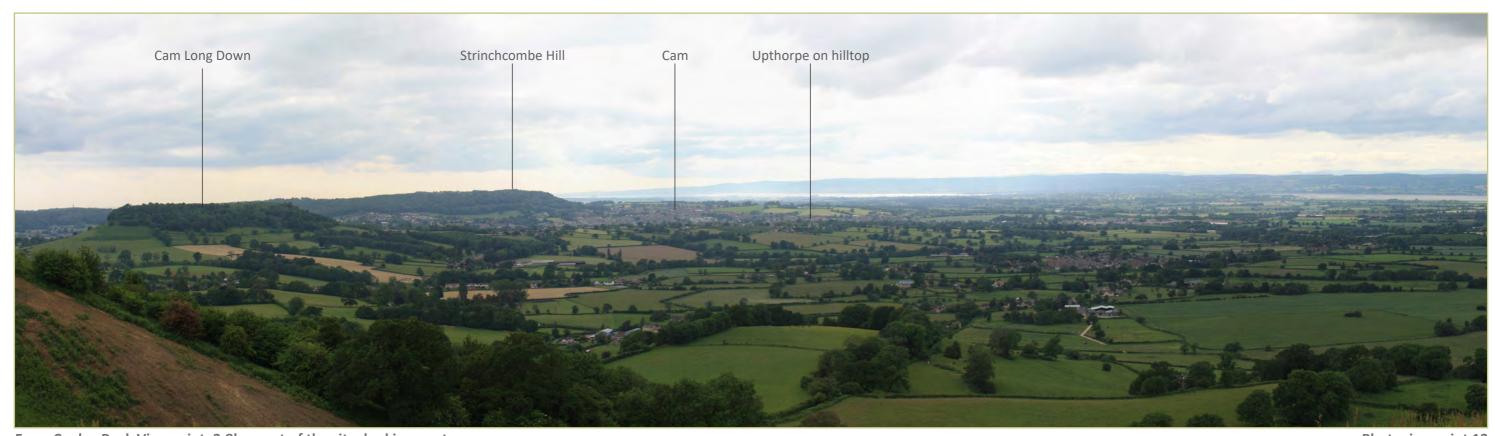
Photoviewpoint 11





From Cam Peak 1,75km south of the site, looking north

Photoviewpoint 12



From Coaley Peak Viewpoint, 3.8km east of the site, looking west

Photoviewpoint 13



Cotswolds AONB

- 5.1 Whilst the site does not lie within the Cotswolds AONB, the settlement at Cam and Dursley and surrounding landscape is situated within the wider setting of the nationally designated landscape. There are views from within the site, town and surrounding landscape towards the distinctive landform of Stinchcombe Hill, 1km to the southwest beyond the settlement and the outliers of Cam Peak and Cam Long Down 1.5km to the southeast. The Cotswold escarpment lies 2,75km to the east, forming a distant backdrop in the wider landscape.
- 5.2 The location of the AONB at Stinchcombe Hill, Cam Peak and Cam Long Down is illustrated on the Site Location plan and Viewpoint Location

Policy Context

5.3 The NPPF places great weight on the conservation and enhancement of landscape and scenic beauty within AONBs which have the highest status of protection (NPPF paragraph 172). Whilst the site and its surroundings are not situated within or adjacent to the AONB, National Planning Practice Guidance PPG) states that development within the settings of AONBs needs to be sensitive to potential impacts on the natural beauty of the areas, where poorly located or designed development can do significant harm. The PPG identifies that this is especially the case where long views from or to the designated landscape are identified as important, and where land within and adjoining the designated area is complimentary. (PPG Paragraph 042 Reference ID: 8-042-20190721 Revision date: 21st July 2019).

Development in the Setting of the Cotswolds AONB Position Statement

- 5.4 Whilst there is no defined geographic extent of the setting, the Cotswolds Conservation Board Position Statement 'Development in the setting of the Cotswolds AONB' (June 2016) recognises the importance of views out from the AONB and towards it from surrounding areas. The statement considers that development proposals that affect views into and out of the AONB need to be assessed to ensure they conserve and enhance the natural beauty and landscape character of the AONB. Emphasis is placed upon views from within the AONB looking towards new development in its s setting.
- 5.5 The position statement states that consideration should be given to the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment, Landscape Strategy and Guidelines and the AONB Management Plan in relation to setting.
- 5.6 AONB Special Qualities and Landscape Character

Special Qualities

5.7 As set out within the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan, the special qualities of the AONB include: the Cotswold Escarpment including views from and to the AONB.

5.8 This includes the setting of the AONB as experienced from land that lies outside the AONB but within its wider visual context.

Landscape Character, Strategy and Guidelines

Escarpment Outliers - Cam Long Down, Peaked Down and Downham Hills

- 5.9 Cam Peak and Cam Long Down to the southeast of Cam are characterised by the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment as falling within the Escarpment Outliers Landscape Character Type (LCT). Key features include:
 - Distinctive Hills detached from the main Cotswolds escarpment and rising above the neighbouring vale forming prominent landscape features visible from great distances.
 - Dramatic panoramic views from upper slopes possible over the Severn Vale to the Welsh Borders and eastwards to the Cotswolds Escarpment.
- 5.10 Landscape Strategies and Guidelines of relevance to the visual setting of the AONB include to:
 - Avoid development that may restrict or obscure views to the upper slope, skylines or sweeping views across the landscape and to distinctive feature such as folly towers and hillforts.

Rolling Hills and Valleys – Stinchcombe and North Nibley

- 5.11 Stinchcombe Hill lies to the southeast of Cam bounding the valley sides where the settlement extends along the River Cam and adjoins the wider vale landscape to the north. Key features include larger settlements with pronounced urban influences at the valley mouths, including Cam.
- 5.12 The assessment identifies land within the mouths of the valleys as less sensitive, although new development should reflect the form, massing and layout of the existing valley settlements and be avoided on highly visible valley sides.
- 5.13 Landscape Strategies and Guidelines include to:
 - Avoid development that may restrict or obscure views to the upper slopes and prominent hills as well as those across valleys.

Escarpment – Uley to Cooper's Hill

- 5.14 The Cotswolds Escarpment lies 2.5km to the east of Cam. Whilst the site and surrounding landscape do not share any characteristics of the escarpment itself, the dramatic landform as a backdrop to wider views and the elevated panoramic vantages gained from the escarpment are key sensitivities of the AONB within the wider landscape setting. The AONB Landscape Character Assessment identifies the following:
 - Steep exposed and elevated west facing escarpment slope forming a

- dramatic relief feature and backdrop to neighbouring lowlands.
- Dramatic panoramic views over the Severn Vale to the Forest of Dean and beyond into Wales, the Malverns and the Shropshire Hills from open areas on the upper escarpment.
- Numerous prehistoric sites and follies with high visibility and wide panoramic viewing opportunities make them popular to visitors and tourists.

Visual Context of the site in relation to the AONB

Views towards the AONB

- 5.15 The context within which views towards the landform of the AONB is experienced from within the site and the surrounding landscape and townscape is summarised below. Reference is made to the Photoviewpoints where relevant.
- 5.16 Views towards the Cotswold's Escarpment from the public footpaths within the site and land to the north are screened by the steeply rising land on the hillside towards Upthorpe to the east.
- 5.17 From public footpaths within in and adjacent to the site on the lower slopes to the east of Cam, there are glimpsed views looking south towards Cam Peak and Cam Long Down set between trees and houses on the rising land towards Upthorpe (**Photoviewpiont 1**). There are also views across the fields and townscape towards Stinchcombe Hill which rises to form a backdrop to Cam to the southwest (Photoviewpoints 2 and 3)
- 5.18 When looking east across the rooftops of Cam from the hills to the west of the town, there are elevated views across the wider landscape towards the Cotswold's escarpment as a backdrop, framed by the distinctive landform of Cam Long Down and Cam Peak to the southeast (Photoviewpoint 8). In this view, the site and adjacent land on the valley sides sit below the hill that rises towards Upthorpe and the woodland, trees and houses that form a settled backdrop on the foothills in the middle distance.

Views from within the AONB

Stinchcombe Hill

- 5.19 Views towards the site from the AONB at Stinchcombe Hill to the southwest are limited by the wooded slopes and hilltop. From the lower slopes on the edge of the AONB which abut the settlement edge views towards the site are screened by intervening built form and trees.
- 5.20 The site is not obvious in views from the AONB at Stinchcombe Hill. If development were visible, it would be in glimpsed views between trees and in context with existing development, including adjacent land within allocation SA3.
- 5.21 Development of the site would not impact on the visual setting of the AONB as experienced from Stinchcombe Hill.



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<u>Cam Peak and Cam Long Down - Photoviewpoint 12</u>

- 5.22 As illustrated by **Photoviewpoint 12**, there are expansive elevated views across the wider landscape from Cam Peak, including the vale and estuary towards the Forest of Dean and beyond. In these expansive views, the site is set beyond Upthorpe Road and is seen within the context of the settlement edge and developed context of Cam. Woodland and trees break up development and form a backdrop to the lower-lying land. The fields on the higher land to the east of the site sit beyond houses on Upthorpe Road, extending towards Upper Upthorpe Farm on the settlement edge.
- 5.23 Allocation SA3 sits beyond the site to the north. Once built out, the development will form a settlement edge context beyond the site in views from within the AONB to the south. Development of the Draft Allocation PS25 immediately to the north and within the site itself will further add to the settlement edge context.
- 5.24 Development on the lower-lying land to the west of the site would be well contained in the wider views, retaining the separation with Upthorpe and reflecting the settlement pattern formed by allocation SA3 and draft allocation PS25. Opportunities exist for the reinforcement of existing field boundaries and softening of development with new hedgerow and tree planting to assimilate housing into the settlement edge in this location.
- 5.25 Development of the site would not interrupt the wide panoramic views from within the AONB at Cam Peak and Cam Long Down and would be seen in context with the existing settlement edge and pattern of built form at Cam.

Cotswolds Escarpment – Photoviewpoint 13

- 5.26 As illustrated by **Photoviewpoint 13**, from the viewpoint at Coaley Peak, the settlement of Cam sits below Stinchcombe Hill on the lower valley sides, with the landform of the hill forming a backdrop. Cam Long Down rises above the rolling low-lying landform and foots hills which form the foreground in these elevated and expansive views across the vale towards the Forest of Dean and into Wales beyond the estuary.
- 5.27 The hill at Upthorpe and intervening trees, woodland and properties screen views of the site and land on the eastern valley sides in this view from the escarpment to the east.
- 5.28 Residential development of the site contained on the western slopes below Upthorpe would not be visible, retaining the character and composition of these elevated views from the Cotswolds escarpment within the AONB.

Summary

- 5.29 Whilst the site is situated within the wider setting of the Cotswolds AONB, given the distance from the designated landscape and settlement edge context, the contribution the site makes to the setting are limited to views to and from the AONB.
- 5.30 As illustrated by the viewpoints from within the AONB at Cam Peak and from the Escarpment at Coaley Peak (**Photoviewpoints 12 and 13**) the site makes a limited contribution to the wider visual setting. Residential development of the site would not significantly impact on the composition of views of the extensive panoramic vistas over the wider landscape.

Opportunities and Constraints

- 5.31 There are views towards Hill to the southwest from within the site and surrounding footpaths. Development proposals should seek to retain views across Cam towards Stinchcombe Hill from existing rights of way and /or areas of public open space where there are open views across the wider landscape.
- 5.32 Whilst views towards Cam Peak and Cam Long Down are limited by intervening landform, trees and houses, proposals should seek to retain views towards these distinctive landforms from within the site and areas of public open space.
- 5.33 Opportunities to open up views from within the site from which the wider AONB can be appreciated should be incorporated into the proposals where possible. This may include from new areas of publicly accessible open space on higher ground towards the east of the site where there are wider views towards the AONB and across the vale and estuary to the northwest.



- 6.1 Having undertaken an appraisal of the landscape and visual context of land northeast of Cam, Incola Landscape Planning have identified a number of Development Opportunities for the delivery of a scheme that takes account of the settlement edge and landscape character. These incorporate existing green infrastructure and landscape features, whilst respecting the sensitivities of the area associated with the separation between settlements, landform and setting to the Cotswolds AONB.
- 6.2 The landscape opportunities that have informed the development of an indicative masterplan and scheme for the site are illustrated on the Development Opportunities plan overleaf and summarised below. These have taken account of a range of factors and help to inform the spatial framework for both built development and areas of green and blue infrastructure that will provide landscape, biodiversity and recreation / amenity benefits.

Northeast Cam – Preferred Direction for Growth

- 6.3 Land to the northeast of Cam, including that beyond the river has been identified as a preferred location for growth in both the adopted Stroud District Local Plan and the emerging pre-submission draft Local Plan Review. This reflects the capacity of the landscape to accommodate development. Physical constraints identified by the local plan review include the floodplain and topography of the valley sides to the east of the settlement, as well as the more distant Cotswold escarpment.
- 6.4 The Stroud District Landscape Sensitivity Assessment that forms part of the evidence base to the Local Plan Review has assessed land within the western site area (Land Parcel CO₃) as being of a Medium landscape sensitivity and able to accommodate housing development. The indicative developable area identified on the **Development Opportunities** plan lies within Land Parcel Co₃ as defined by the Council's landscape sensitivity assessment.

Land allocated to the northeast of Cam include:

- 6.5 Adopted Allocation SA3 to the north of the site for 450 dwellings, and 11.4 hectares of employment land that is currently under construction and partially complete.
- 6.6 Draft Allocation PS25 extending across the western site area and connecting with SA3 to the north is also proposed for residential development in the pre-submission draft Local Plan Review. Policy PS25 seeks to allocate land for 180 dwellings, as well as new accessible green space including structural landscape buffer.
- 6.7 The development of the consented and draft allocations will place the site within the built, urban context and associated landscape buffers and mitigation planting along the settlement edge fronting the countryside.
- 6.8 The eastern edge to the Draft Allocation PS25 does not follow existing field patterns and would provide a new settlement edge that would not fit

- within the existing structure and character of the landscape and transition formed by the land within allocation SA3.
- 6.9 Allocation SA₃ to the north follows field boundaries and the line of the river corridor, offering opportunities to incorporate existing hedgerows, trees and landscape features into the settlement edge.
- 6.10 By not following the field pattern, Draft Allocation PS25 does allow for the creation of a sympathetic edge and transition that incorporated existing boundaries and features on the settlement edge and within areas of associated green infrastructure and open space.
- 6.11 Through the cohesive development of the site to incorporate the features as set-out on the **Development Opportunities** plan and as summarised below, there are opportunities to deliver a scheme that integrates with the allocated land to the north, sits within the existing defined field pattern on the lower slopes and provides substantial new areas of land managed for multifunctional green and blue infrastructure. These will include for biodiversity improvements and recreation and amenity benefits as well as the retention, enhancement and reinstatement of landscape features, including hedgerows, trees and orchards that are typical of the historic land use and pattern.

Site Context – Opportunities and Constraints

- 6.12 Through the appraisal of the landscape and visual context of the site, the following matters have been identified as opportunities and constraints to the development in landscape and visual terms and have been used to inform the Development Opportunities.
- 6.13 Two Options have been presented on the **Development Opportunities** plans. These reflect opportunities for two different access points to the development off Upthorpe Road. The landscape principles and proposals, including the development parcels are largely similar for both of the options with differences relating to road alignments and associated tree and hedgerow planting at site boundaries and alongside access roads.

Landform – Separation of Settlements and Setting to the AONB

- 6.14 As recognised by the Council's Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, the rising slopes to the east are sensitive to development, with properties on the higher land having the potential to impact upon the physical and visual separation of Upthorpe on the hilltop to the east, as well as the settlement pattern and the character of the foot slopes and the setting that they provide to the scarp and outliers of the AONB.
- 6.15 As demonstrated through the ZTV analysis, development of up to 10 metres in height can be accommodated on the site up to the 50m contour without causing visual coalescence with Upthorpe to the northeast. This results from the more steeply sloping land above the 55m contour that levels off towards the hilltop at Upthorpe. There are therefore opportunities to extend development further east than the 50m contour and line proposed within Draft Allocation PS25.

- 6.16 As shown on the **Development Opportunities** plan, through limiting the height of development beyond the 50m contour and containing development parcels on the lower-lying land within the existing field boundaries, the development will be contained in the landscape, fitting with the allocated land and development to the north and the settlement pattern.
- 6.17 Retaining development within the existing hedgerow boundaries allows for the integration of existing and new landscape features and green infrastructure to retain the field pattern, settlement edge and create a soft transition. Furthermore, through the management of land to the east on the higher ground as meadow grassland with reinforced hedgerows and hedgerow trees, the character and setting will be preserved and enhanced.
- 6.18 The visual context in cross-valley views is analysed further below with reference to annotated photoviews. These demonstrate how the development will preserve the views and setting of the distinctive landform of AONB, including: Stinchcombe Hill, Cam Peak, Long Cam Down and the Cotswolds Escarpment.

Public Rights of Way and Access to the Countryside

- 6.19 The public footpaths that pass through the site provide connections between the town and the countryside, allowing access for residents and visitors to the wider public rights of way network within the Cotswolds and providing a well-used recreational resource. It is therefore important to retain the existing access provided by footpaths between Upthorpe Road to the south and Cam to the west.
- 6.20 Whilst there are footpaths to the north of the site that extend to the north and east, leading to Upthorpe and connect with Upthorpe and the eastern edge of Cam, including Allocation SA3, there are no connections through the site that extend to the east. There are therefore opportunities to provide new footpath links that run through areas of green space and connect with Upthorpe and the wider rights of way network that leads to the countryside and AONB to the east.

Landscape Features and Habitats

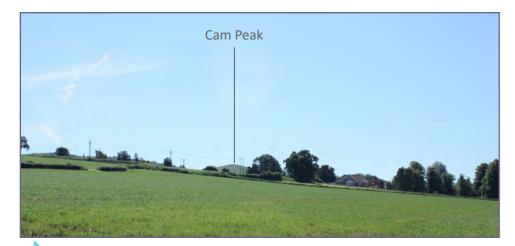
- 6.21 Hedgerows to field boundaries and mature hedgerow oak trees provide a defined field pattern and distinctive features within the landscape, combining with small woodlands and belts of trees on the upper slopes to form wooded skylines.
- 6.22 The River Cam and Rackleaze Nature Reserve provide a green corridor providing habitats for a range of wildlife, as well as being of value for amenity purposes.
- 6.23 There are opportunities to reinforce the hedgerows and field boundaries with new tree planting, including hedgerow trees and tree belts to strengthen the landscape structure and provide a soft transitional edge to the settlement.



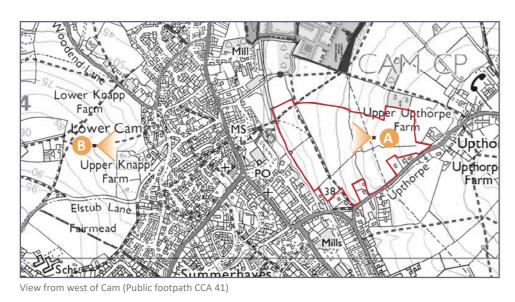
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- 6.24 This will be in keeping with the approach adopted for Allocation SA₃ to the north, which incorporates existing hedgerows and trees within areas of green infrastructure on the settlement edge.
- 6.25 There are also opportunities to provide a green corridor along the river to the west of the site, linking with the existing wooded and the nature reserve as part of the multifunctional green spaces within the development.



View from Public Footpath CCA 37, looking southeast towards Cam Peak







Development Opportunities

- 1. Have Regard to the topography. Setting housing below the steeply sloping land to the east and within the existing field pattern. Residential development contained on lower-lying land, retaining physical and visual separation with Upthorpe to the east and reflecting settlement pattern and edge treatment to SA3 to the north.
- 2. Single Storey development between the 50m and 55m contour.

 Outward facing, lower density development to reduce prominence and create softer built edge fronting areas of green space and retained and strengthened field boundary hedgerows.
- **3. Existing hedgerows retained and enhanced.** To include new planting, gapping up and hedgerow tree planting to strengthen landscape structure, soften the built edge and reflect built edge and transitional character of SA₃ to the north.
- 4. Informal Open Space. Elevated land to the east managed as meadow grassland and accessible green space, including opportunities to enjoy expansive view to the west and northwest from higher land.
- 5. Pedestrian links with Upthorpe. Opportunity for new footpath linking Cam with Upthorpe through areas of multifunctional green infrastructure within the scheme and to the east of the site.
- **6. Reinstatement of Orchards.** Opportunities for community orchard planting to reflect historic orchards around Upthorpe and provide biodiversity and community benefits.
- 7. Retained Public Rights of Way. Ensuring connections with wider right of way network are retained within areas of retained open space and green infrastructure.
- **8.** Riverside Linear Green Space. Provision of multifunctional green and blue infrastructure alongside river corridor. Opportunities to incorporate drainage attenuation and provide recreational routes alongside areas for wildlife and biodiversity enhancement associate with waterbodies, riparian vegetation and management of new green space.
- 9. Retaining Landscape Features. Retention of boundary hedgerows and distinctive mature oak trees as features in the landscape, supplemented with new tree planting and reinforcement / management of hedgerows.
- **10.** Access off Upthorpe Road. Vehicular access off Upthorpe Road through area retained as green space with hedgerow and tree planting to provide structure and minimise impact upon the visual amenity of residents of adjacent properties.

- 11. Retained Views to Cam Peak. Opportunities to retain views towards distinctive landform of Cam Peak from public footpaths and areas of publicly accessible green space. Views towards the Cotswolds Escarpment from the lower-lying land to the west of the site are screened by the rising land to the east.
- **12.New Field Boundaries.** Opportunities to plant new native hedgerows and hedgerow trees to reflect field pattern. This will strengthen the landscape structure and provide biodiversity enhancements.

Site Allocations and Development Proposals - Visual Context and Setting of the AONB

- 6.26 In order to demonstrate how the developable area as shown on the **Development Opportunities** plans fit alongside the allocations within the landscape setting of Cam, Incola Landscape Planning have prepared annotated photographs looking across the site and wider landscape. These include views from the higher land to the west of Cam and the eastern site area, which has the potential to form open space as part of the development of the site. View shave also been included from Cam Peak within the AONB.
- 6.27 These views also illustrate how the extent of development proposed takes into account the sensitivities associated with the site and its situation on the valley sides to the east of The River Cam, including separation with the settlement of Upthorpe to the east and the visual setting of the AONB, including views to and from Cam Peak, as well as those towards Stinchcombe Hill, Cam Long Down and the Cotswolds Escarpment to the
- 6.28 The photographs are presented overleaf, and described below:

Views from the East

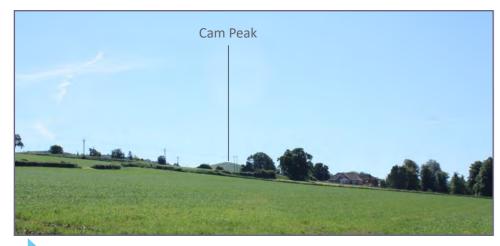
- 6.29 **Viewpoint A** from the fields on the higher land within the eastern site area show how the delivery of a residential scheme in line with the Development Opportunities will retain the setting of Cam to the west, including Stinchcombe Hill within the Cotswolds AONB and undeveloped pasture on the hillside that rises above the town as a backdrop.
- 6.30 As illustrated in the view, the extension of the development edge beyond the 50m contour as shown for the would not encroach into the view or the landscape in the foreground. Reinforcement of the existing field boundaries with hedgerow trees would strengthen the existing structure and character, whilst providing a soft edge and transition to the settlement.
- 6.31 Elevated views from the elevated fields to the east of the site could be provided within areas of publicly accessible open space with new footpath links to Upthorpe.

Views from the West

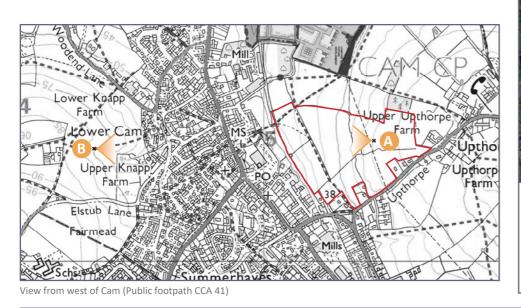
- 6.32 **Viewpoint B** from public footpath CCA 41 to the west of Cam shows how the developable area identified on the **Development Opportunities** plans would site below the rising land to the east, fitting with the allocated land northeast of Cam, set within the framework of existing hedgerows and trees to field boundaries s on the lower slopes.
- 6.33 The image also demonstrates the retained physical separation with Upthorpe, situated on the hilltop beyond, and the setting of the escarpment foot slopes to the dramatic rising landform of the AONB at Cam Peak, Cam Long Down and the escarpment as a backdrop to the view.



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View from Public Footpath CCA 37, looking southeast towards Cam Peak

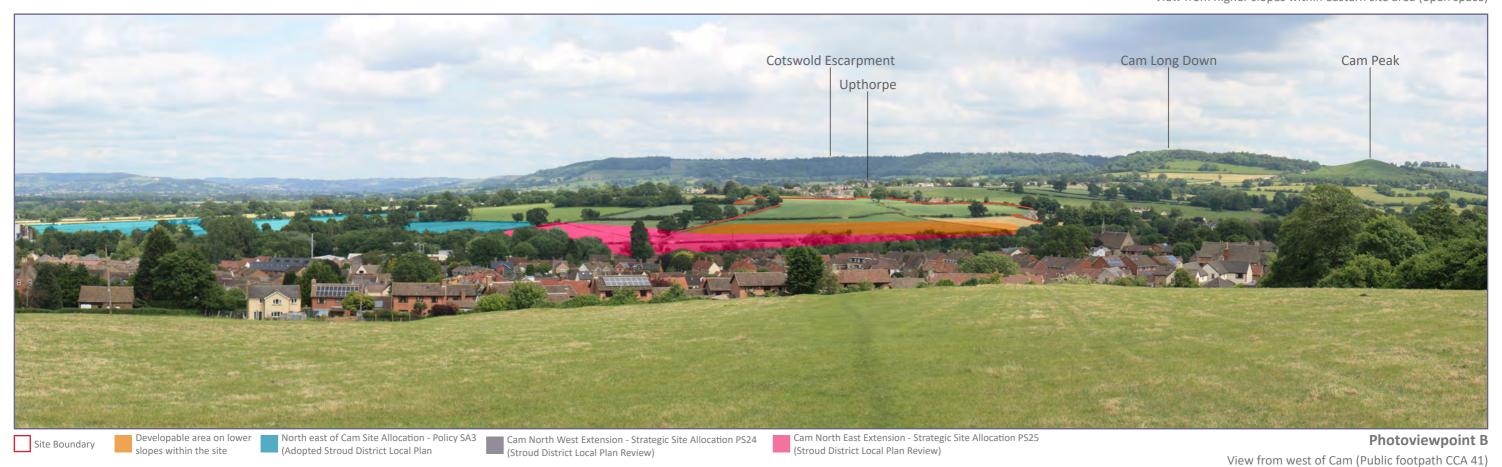








Photoviewpoint AView from higher slopes within eastern site area (open space)





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