

Land south of Little Wymondley:

Landscape sensitivity study

**Final report to North Hertfordshire District Council,
July 2013**

Project Title: Landscape Sensitivity Study for land south of Little Wymondley

Client: North Hertfordshire District Council

Version	Date	Version Details	Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by Principal
0	21/06/2013	Initial draft	Kate Anderson, Andrew Tempany	Andrew Tempany	Kate Ahern
1	01/07/13	Final issue	Kate Anderson, Andrew Tempany	Andrew Tempany	Kate Ahern



Landscape Sensitivity Study for land south of Little Wymondley

Final Report for North Hertfordshire District Council
Prepared by LUC
July 2013

Planning & EIA
Design
Landscape Planning
Landscape Management
Ecology
Mapping & Visualisation

LUC LONDON
43 Chalton Street
London NW1 1JD
T 020 7383 5784
F 020 7383 4798
london@landuse.co.uk

Offices also in:
Bristol
Glasgow
Edinburgh



FS 566056
EMS 566057

Land Use Consultants Ltd
Registered in England
Registered number: 2549296
Registered Office:
43 Chalton Street
London NW1 1JD

LUC uses 100% recycled paper

Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Methodology	3
3	Study area: Landscape and Environmental Context	7
4	Sensitivity Analysis and Guidance	11
	Landscape character unit: LW1	13
	Landscape character unit: LW2	17
5	Summary and conclusions	23

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Field survey form

Acknowledgements:

This study was steered by a team of officers from North Hertfordshire District Council – Helen Leitch and Louise Symes. The study was undertaken by LUC (Land Use Consultants) in conjunction with the steering group. LUC’s team comprised Kate Ahern (Principal), Andrew Tempany (Project Manager), Kate Anderson and Victoria Goosen.

Mapping in this report is reproduced from Ordnance Survey information with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, Crown Copyright, Land Use Consultants, Licence Number 100019265.

1 Introduction

Context and Scope

Background

- 1.1 Land Use Consultants (LUC) was commissioned in June 2013 by North Hertfordshire District to undertake a landscape sensitivity study in relation to potential residential development on land to the south of Little Wymondley. The study area is shown at **Figure 1.1** below.

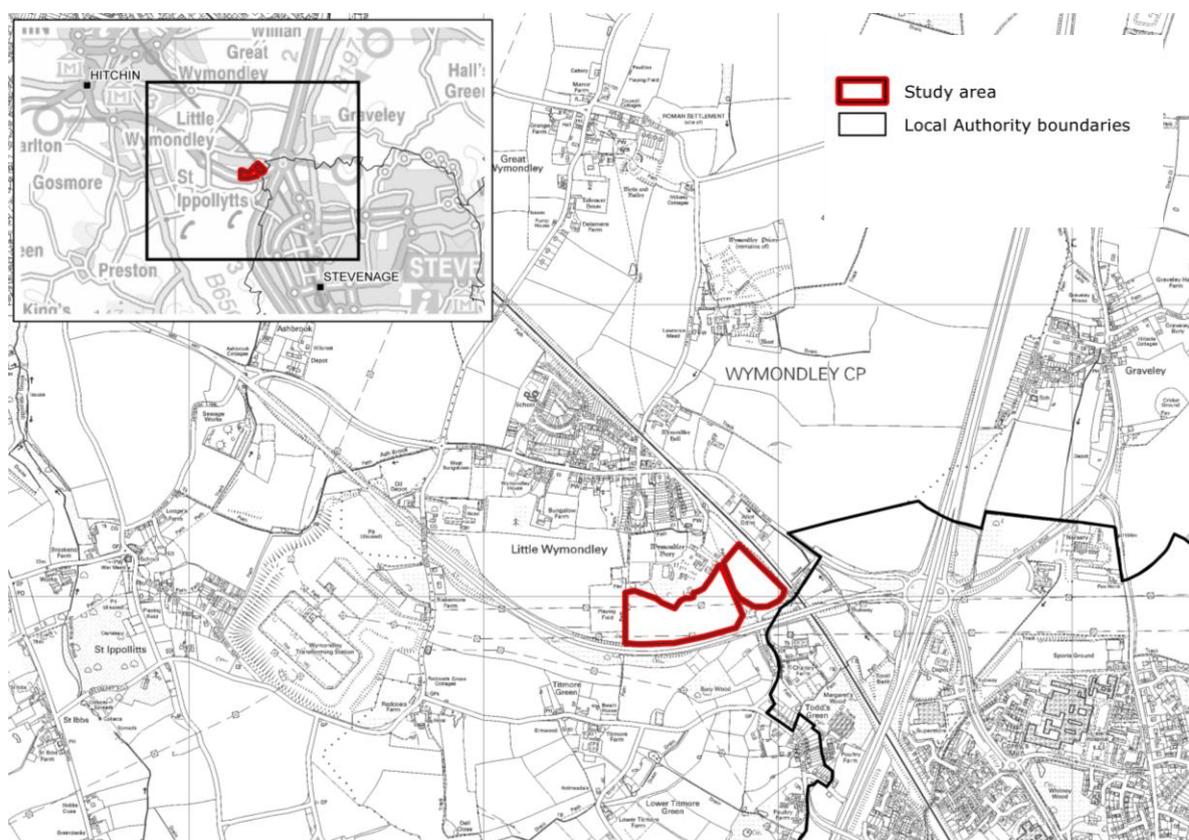


Figure 1.1: Site location and context

- 1.2 This study will provide background information in relation to the Local Plan currently being prepared and to inform future development within North Hertfordshire.

Site location and context

- 1.3 The site is located on the southern edge of the village of Little Wymondley, bordered by the railway line and the Stevenage Road to the east and to the A602 bypass to the south. To the north lies the grounds of Wymondley Bury, a grade 1 listed timber framed, brick faced former manor house. Playing fields and the Wymondley Tennis Club lie immediately west and north west, with a water tower just beyond the north western corner of the site. The site itself

comprises horse grazed pasture and pony paddocks, and is split north south by the southern access drive to the Bury.

- 1.4 The site falls within the green belt. The small settlement of Todds Green lies immediately south of the site and the A602. The site is intervisible with the northern edge of Stevenage including the Lister Hospital.

Key study objectives

- 1.5 Key objectives of this study are as follows:
- To assess the sensitivity of the landscape of the study area for possible large scale residential development, and to provide sensitivity judgments, to inform future spatial planning and preferred options within the Local Plan
 - To provide guidance to focus change in the most positive terms, for parts of the study area which are judged to have lower landscape sensitivity to the change proposed

Summary of existing landscape studies

- 1.6 The baseline for this study is formed by the landscape classification in the North Hertfordshire District and Stevenage Landscape Character Assessment (LCA). This document provides a suite of strategic landscape design and management guidance. The North Hertfordshire and Stevenage Landscape Character Assessment provides a good basis for the study, with some sub divisions defined to reflect the more local scale of this study.
- 1.7 In addition, account has also been taken of two earlier landscape sensitivity studies:
- North Hertfordshire Sensitivity Study, The Landscape Partnership, 2011 (a strategic study undertaken to understand inherent sensitivities of the district character areas)
 - Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study, NHDC, 2006 (this looked at small land parcels around the periphery of Hitchin)
- 1.8 Reference has also been made to the North Hertfordshire District Green Infrastructure (GI) Plan (LUC, 2009) in developing landscape guidance and recommendations, as appropriate, in this study.

2 Methodology

2.1 This sets out the method used in undertaking the study. The key stages were as follows:

- Desk study and data review
- Landscape classification
- Criteria definition
- Field survey
- Sensitivity analysis
- Landscape guidance

Desk study and data review

2.2 This involved review of the earlier landscape studies and strategic context, to focus both method development and an understanding of landscape issues to inform selection of sensitivity criteria to test through fieldwork. The key data used is:

- NHDC, 2011, North Hertfordshire Landscape Study (Character, Sensitivity and Capacity), [based on the original Landscape Character Assessment of North Hertfordshire and Stevenage by Babbie, 2004 and the Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity work by The Landscape Partnership, 2011]
- Halcrow, 2006, Stevenage Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study
- LUC, 2009, North Hertfordshire District Green Infrastructure Plan
- Relevant saved Local Plan policies from the North Hertfordshire District Local Plan

Landscape classification

2.3 The existing district landscape character area in which the site lies was sub divided into two smaller scale landscape units for the purposes of the study (presented at **section 4**). Sub divisions were made after reviewing a variety of GIS data, such as Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC), heritage designations and the nature conservation context of the study area, and tested in the field.

Criteria definition

2.4 A series of criteria have been defined to focus the analysis. These make reference to the work previously undertaken by LUC on behalf of Landscape East¹ in developing a Regional Landscape Sensitivity Method, and to the North Hertfordshire District Landscape Character Assessment. The criteria have also been informed by our knowledge of the area through the Green Infrastructure Plan and the earlier landscape sensitivity work at Stevenage North and Hitchin south west.

2.5 The criteria are presented, with explanation, in three separate sections, below. These are:

- Analysis criteria – identifying landscape attributes

¹ Landscape East is an organisation bringing together landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, historic environment and spatial planning interests to steer the development of the East of England Landscape Framework and to identify and disseminate good practice in all aspects of landscape protection, management and planning - <http://landscape-east.org.uk/>

- Development model for the analysis
- Landscape sensitivity scale and definitions

Analysis criteria – identifying landscape attributes

2.6 The following landscape attributes have been used to assess sensitivity to residential development:

Landform and topography

2.7 Presence or absence of landform variation. For example, whilst rolling/undulating landforms may be more able to contain visual impact of development, they would have a higher sensitivity to residential development in landscape terms than flat landforms or those with comparatively little topographic variation. Key landform features such as undeveloped valleys, hill slopes or scarps which serve to contain development will have a higher sensitivity.

Landscape pattern, complexity

2.8 Level of landscape structure and field pattern variation. For example a landscape comprising a complex array of different habitats and/or land cover features such as ancient woodland, or presence of key habitats will have a higher sensitivity to residential development than will a simple landscape.

Cultural pattern and time depth

2.9 Indicators include aspects of the historic landscape/historic environment, such as parkland, historic processes which have shaped the landscape, and scheduled monuments and their setting. A landscape with a strong sense of 'time depth' (historic continuity) and intact cultural pattern will have a higher sensitivity to residential development than a landscape where cultural pattern is eroded or comparatively absent.

Settlement pattern

2.10 Consideration of settlement form, density and age/vernacular, and coherence of settlement edge. Landscapes with a coherent settlement edge, without built form and infrastructure or those displaying a small scale and traditional settlement character (e.g. nucleated or dispersed) will have a higher sensitivity to residential development than will landscapes characterised by infrastructure and modern development or settlement 'edge' influences.

Experiential qualities

2.11 These include movement, tranquillity, sense of remoteness and aesthetic attributes such as interplay of colour, texture, light and reflection. Landscapes with a higher degree of remoteness and tranquillity will have a higher sensitivity to residential development.

Visual and intervisibility

2.12 This includes consideration of key views, visual relationships and inter-visibility within and across the landscape units and with significant features of the wider landscape. Landscapes which form a skyline in key views will have a higher sensitivity to residential development which may breach these skylines.

Development model used to inform the analysis

2.13 The form of development being assessed for the purposes of this study is a possible settlement extension to Little Wymondley (residential development, net density of 30-40 dwellings per hectare (dph) or gross density of 15-20 dph). Whilst the work has considered large scale residential development in a more general sense (in the context of medium to high density residential development) for the purpose of assessing landscape sensitivity, the following model has informed thinking and the production of supporting guidance to focus change:

- Medium to high density scenario of 2-2.5 storey dwellings arranged at a net density range of 30-40 dwellings per hectare (dph) or a gross density of 15-20 dph (e.g. including roads and green infrastructure).

Landscape sensitivity scale and definitions

- 2.14 The following 5 point sensitivity scale was developed and applied to the landscape units in relation to the landscape attributes.

Landscape sensitivity scale

Sensitivity level	Definition
High	Key characteristics of the landscape are highly vulnerable to the type of change being assessed, with such change likely to result in a significant change in character.
Moderate-high	Many of the key landscape characteristics are vulnerable to the type of change being assessed, with such change likely to result in a potentially significant change in character. Considerable care will be needed in locating and designing change within the landscape.
Moderate	Some of the key characteristics of the landscape may be vulnerable to the type of change being assessed. Although the landscape may have some ability to absorb change, some alteration in character may result. Considerable care may be needed in locating and designing change within the landscape.
Moderate- low	The majority of the landscape characteristics are less likely to be adversely affected by change. Although change can potentially be more easily accommodated, care would still be needed in locating and designing change in the landscape. There is an opportunity to create and plan/ design for new character.
Low	Key characteristics of the landscape are less likely to be adversely affected by change. Change can potentially be more easily accommodated without significantly altering character. Sensitive design would still be needed in relation to accommodating change in the landscape. There is an opportunity to create and plan/ design for new character.

Field survey

- 2.15 The landscape attributes of the local landscape units, and their sensitivities to the development model, were tested through field survey and recorded on a survey form (survey form template is shown at **Appendix 1**). The site was visited in June 2013 by chartered Landscape Architects (CMLI). Field survey was undertaken from public vantage points, rights of way and public highways within and in the vicinity of the study area, supported by photographs and map annotations, as appropriate.

Sensitivity analysis

- 2.16 With reference to the analysis criteria and 5 point sensitivity scale defined above, an overall landscape sensitivity judgement was defined for each landscape unit, supported by colour coded GIS mapping. The judgement included a narrative of what is sensitive, and why, to help inform guidance.

A note on the baseline for the sensitivity analysis

- 2.17 Given that the detailed form and density of proposed development within the area is still largely unknown and cannot be predicted until more detailed spatial proposals emerge, the baseline for the assessment has been taken as conditions on site in June 2013.

Landscape guidance

- 2.18 The overall sensitivity judgement was used to identify whether development can be accommodated in the landscape units, and to develop landscape guidance to focus change in ways which respond to landscape character – identification of important and sensitive landscape features which would act as constraints to development.

Notes on scale and relationship to previous studies

- 2.19 This study has been undertaken at a scale of 1:10,000 and within the existing framework set by the District LCA. It understands the sensitivity of the landscape and the attributes which make up that landscape, to a specific form of change (residential and mixed use development), as opposed to the strategic sensitivity analysis undertaken in the character area level study by The Landscape Partnership, which identified inherent or general landscape sensitivities. Therefore different judgements are reflective both of study scale and the fact that landscape attributes have specific sensitivities and levels of sensitivity vary with specific/defined change scenarios.
- 2.20 Account has also been taken of the findings of the landscape sensitivity study undertaken by Halcrow in relation to Stevenage's settlement fringes (which covers the Little Wymondley study area), in developing this study.

3 Study area: Landscape and Environmental Context

3.1 This section sets out the landscape context of the study area in terms of landscape character and relevant environmental designations. Relevant information on biodiversity and cultural pattern has been included, insofar as this relates to character.

Landscape Character

3.2 This summarises national and local (district) landscape character context. Landscape character context is shown at **Figure 3.1**.

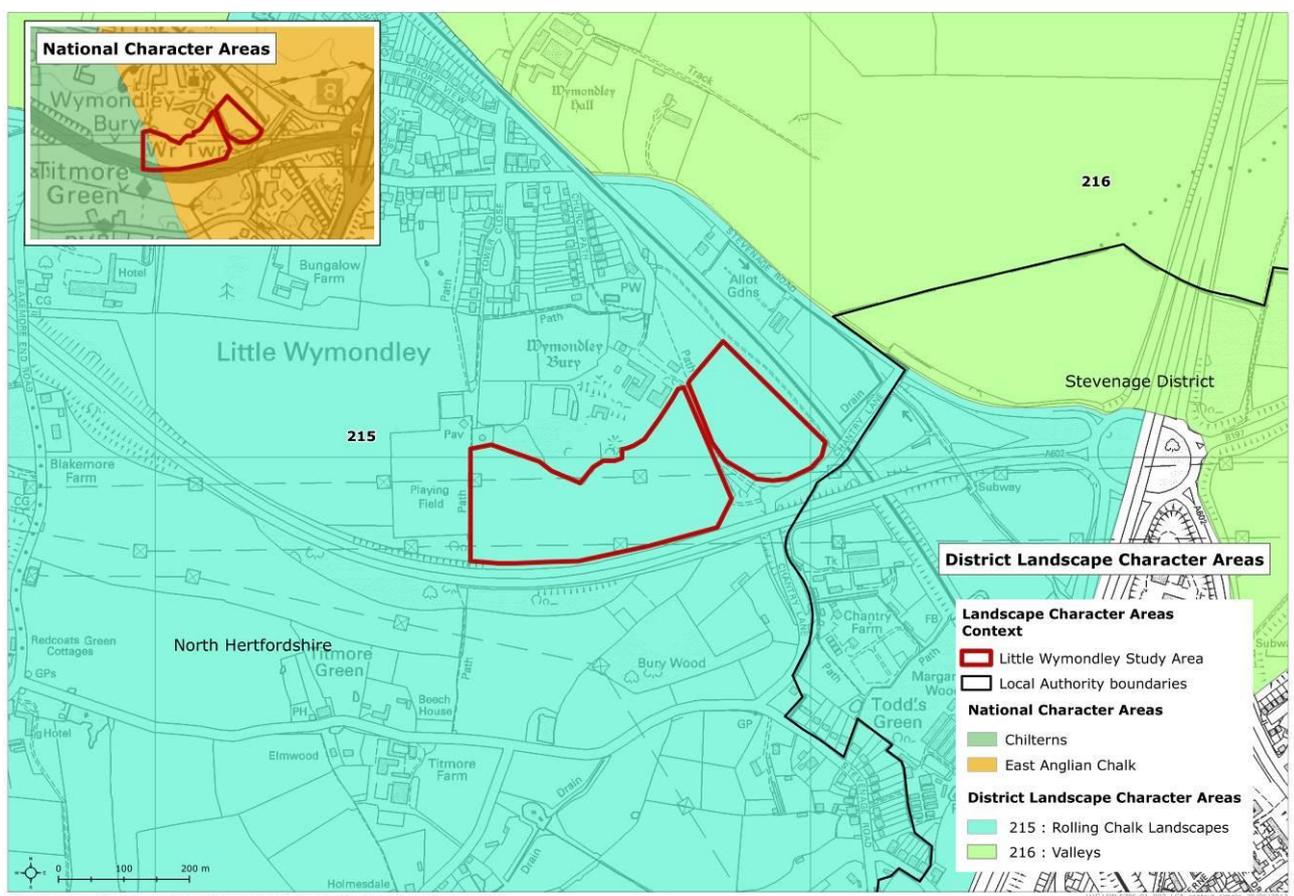


Figure 3.1: Landscape character context

National character context

3.3 The study area lies within National Character Area (NCA) 87: East Anglian Chalk. The key characteristics relevant to the study areas are as follows:

NCA 87: East Anglian Chalk

3.4 A landscape defined by distinctive open variable/rolling topography – a continuation of the Chilterns. Rolling chalk downlands are now mainly under arable cultivation with distinctive roadside and hilltop beech belts and clumps and ash woodlands. The landscape is crossed by a network of long straight roads, such as the A505 and the A1(M), and settlement pattern is defined

by isolated farmsteads and nucleated valley villages, with a few larger towns associated with large transport corridors e.g. Baldock, Letchworth. A number of villages still retain a sense of rural character. Ancient routes such as the Icknield Way are a feature of the landscape.

- 3.5 The westernmost edge of the site lies on the boundary with NCA 110: Chilterns.

Local landscape character

- 3.6 The North Hertfordshire and Stevenage Landscape Character Assessment is the source of baseline information on the landscape character of the study area. The landscape character area within the study area is LCA 215 Wymondley and Titmore Green. The LCA identifies this as a rolling chalk landscape, often of intimate scale, with a historic settlement pattern linked by winding lanes, in close proximity to strategic transport corridors such as the A1(M) and A602. A settled character is created by small scattered hamlets and farmsteads often using traditional vernacular materials.

Green infrastructure

- 3.7 The North Hertfordshire District Green Infrastructure Plan (GI Plan) identifies a number of opportunities and principles for green infrastructure in and around Stevenage's urban fringe, which relate to the Little Wymondley site. Relevant points noted in the GI Plan are summarised below:
- The aspiration for a radial, shared use greenway for Stevenage (GI Plan project SN18), which includes the footpath forming the Little Wymondley site's western boundary
 - In the GI principles for the area around Stevenage, reference is also made to the need for more detailed character and sensitivity analysis in consideration of potential new development
 - The plan also makes reference to conservation of the 'intimate, small scale landscape character of the rolling chalk landscape around Wymondley, to the west of the A1(M) corridor, in particular the irregular field pattern which is well defined by mixed hedgerows, and the network of small, sunken lanes'

Nature conservation designations

- 3.8 The site has no designated nature conservation interest. The nearest areas of interest are located south of the A602, as shown on Figure 3.2 overleaf.

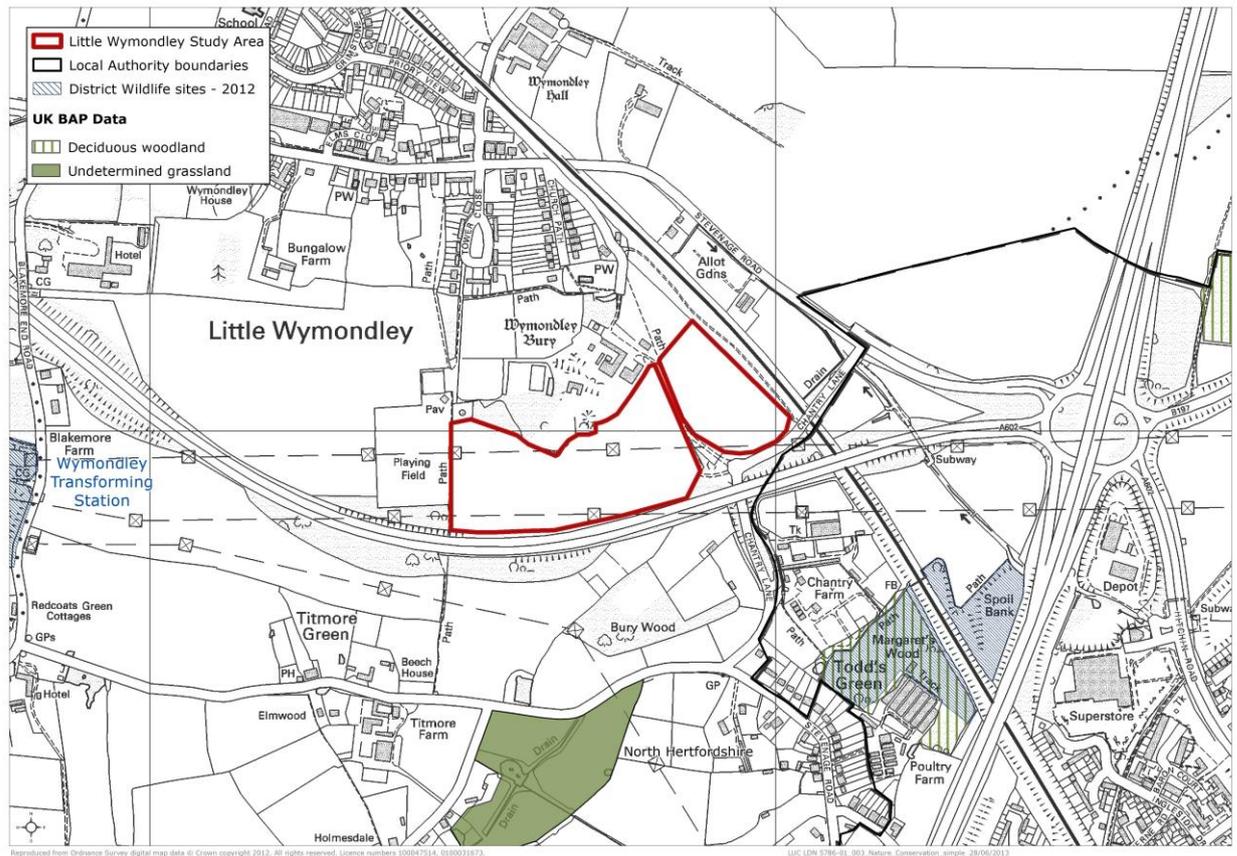


Figure 3.2: Nature conservation context

Cultural heritage

- 3.9 The cultural heritage context and historic landscape character types from the Hertfordshire Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) are shown on **Figure 3.3** overleaf. This shows that the eastern half of the site is defined by 20th century field systems, with the western half defined by modified early enclosures, and the site of the Bury to the north including 19th century enclosures. The Bury is a Grade I listed structure, with its origins in a 14th century hall house, as described earlier.

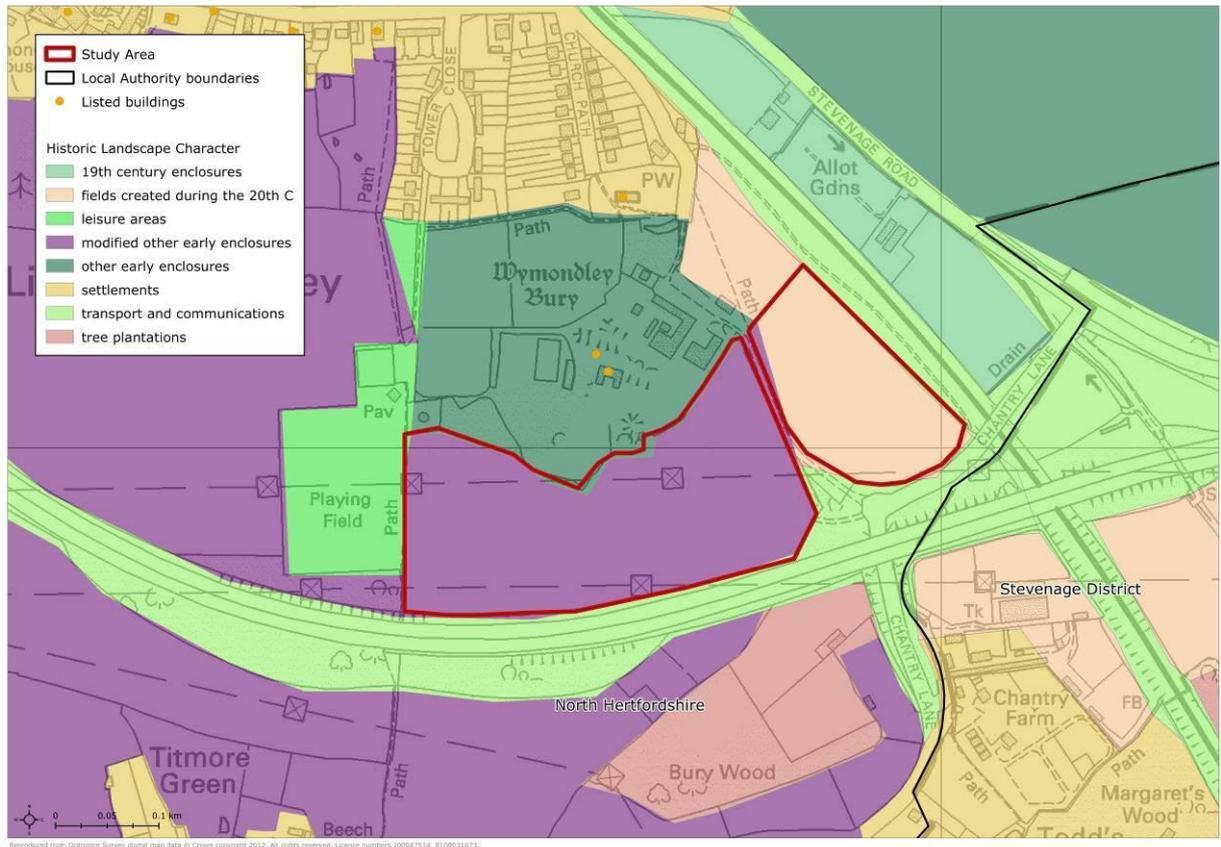


Figure 3.3: Cultural heritage

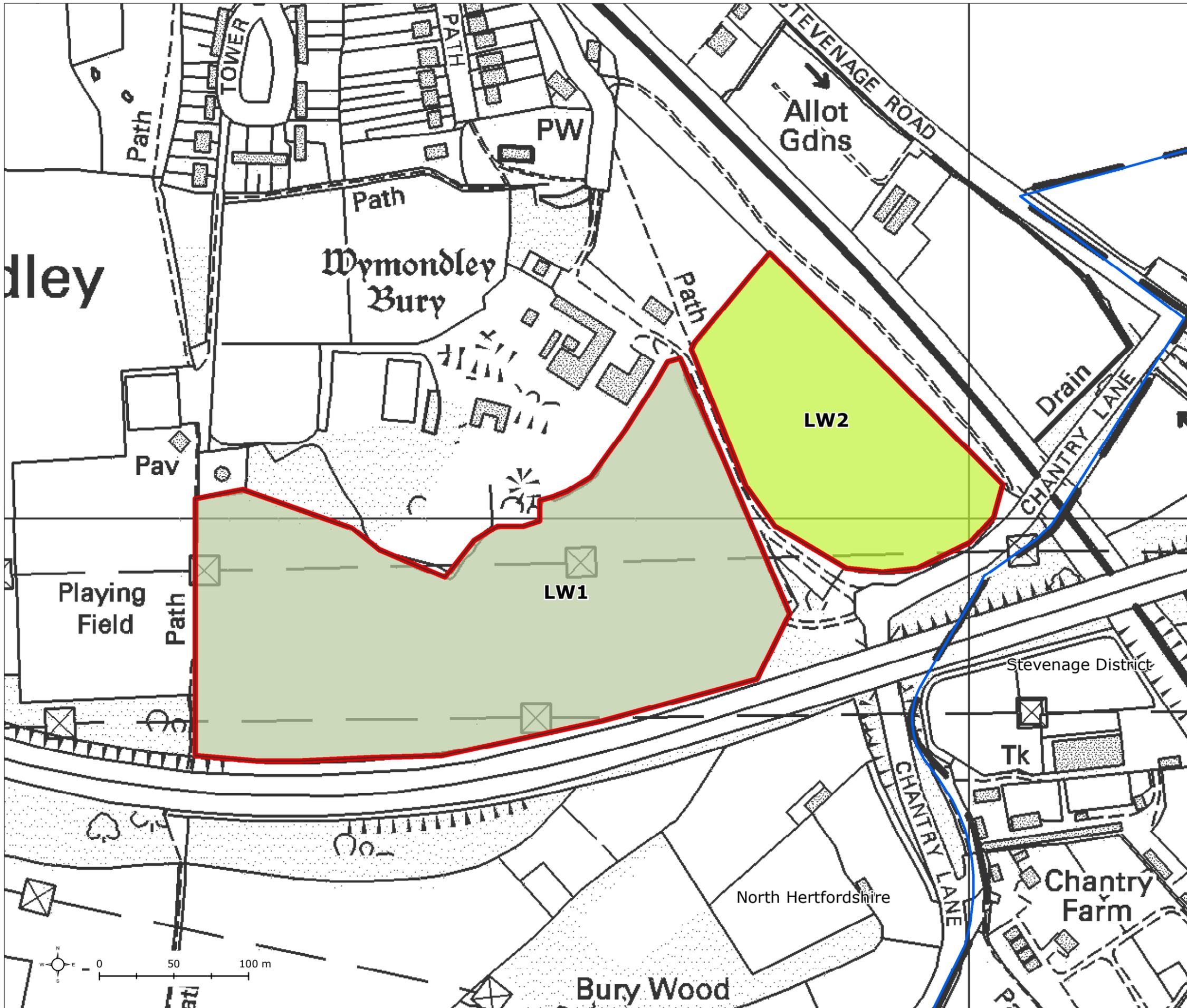
4 Sensitivity Analysis and Guidance

- 4.1 This section sets out the sensitivity analysis for the two landscape units with the study area. The sensitivity analysis has applied the criteria presented at **section 2**, together with the 5 point sensitivity scale. The sensitivity analysis has been undertaken with reference to medium to high net density (30-40 dwellings per hectare), large scale residential development. Consideration has also been given to potential infrastructure where relevant, such as potential access from the highway network.
- 4.2 For the purposes of this study, the district landscape character area 215 Wymondley-Titmore Green has been used, sub-divided into two smaller units based on common landscape patterns and characteristics observed in the field. The landscape units used for the analysis are shown on **Figure 4.1** overleaf.
- 4.3 The sensitivity analysis has been undertaken at a scale of 1:10,000 and is appropriate for use at that scale.
- 4.4 The local landscape units are as follows:
- LW1 (Little Wymondley 1): Covering the large field of pony paddocks to the west of the approach drive to the Bury
 - LW2 (Little Wymondley 2): Covering the smaller field of rough pasture east of the access drive, bounded by the railway to the east and Chantry Lane to the south
- 4.5 The findings are presented in the remainder of this section. Supporting mapping in relation to the sensitivity analysis is shown on **Figure 4.2**, at the end of this section. Summaries and conclusions as to the study's findings are presented at **section 5**.

Figure 4.1

Landscape Units for Analysis

-  Study Area
-  Local Authority boundaries



Map Scale @ A3:1:2,500

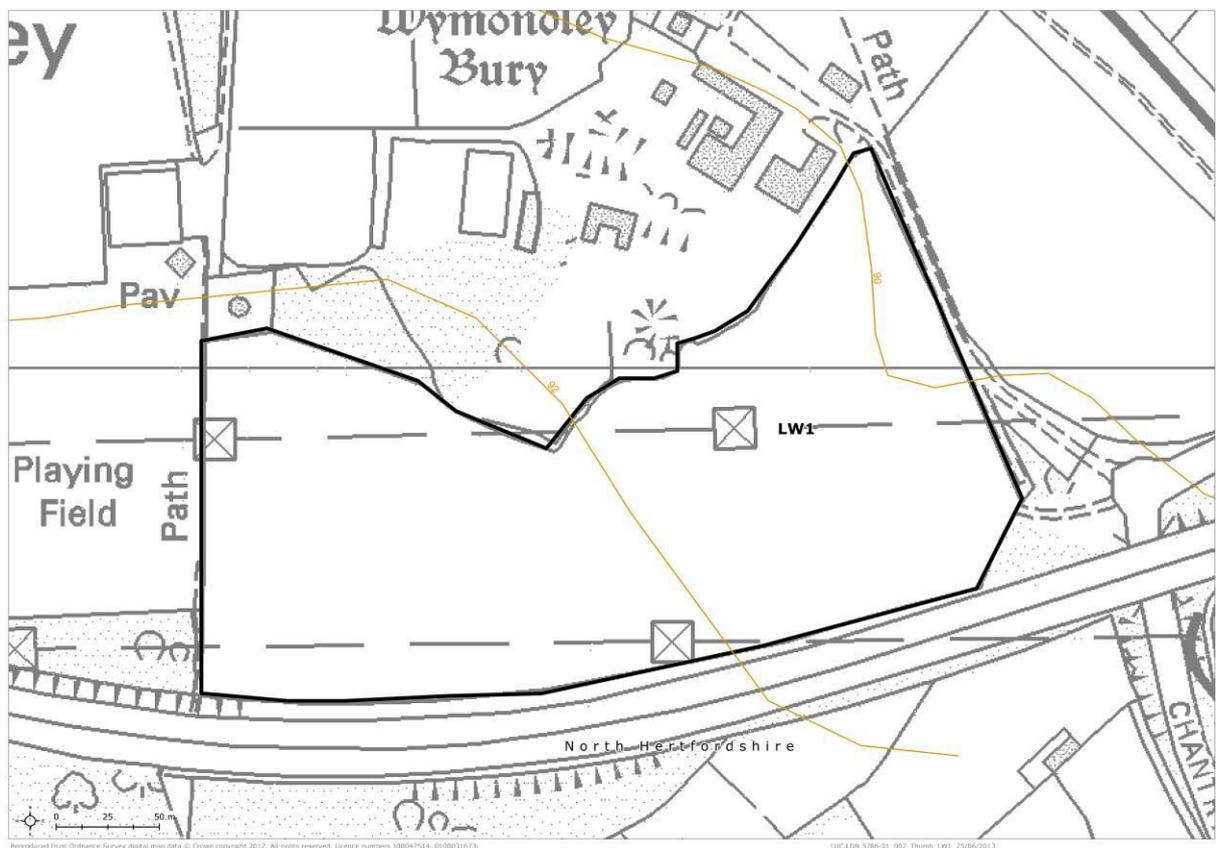


Landscape character unit: LW1

Baseline

Location

- 4.7 This landscape unit is located immediately south of Wymondley Bury and south east of the playing fields and tennis club on the edge of the village of Little Wymondley. Parkland exotic and mature tree planting within the grounds of Wymondley Bury define the northern site boundary, whilst the eastern boundary is defined by post and rail fencing and the approach drive to the Bury. To the south lies the wooded edge of the A602 bypass, with a dense hedgerow forming the western boundary. A pylon line crosses the landscape unit east-west.



LCA context

National

Area 87: East Anglian Chalk. A distinctive and open topography (a continuation of the Chilterns) and large scale chalk downland, now mainly under arable cultivation. The landscape is cut by minor chalk river valleys such as the Ivel and the Rhee and crossed by long straight roads and ancient Roman routes such as the Icknield Way, with the A1 and A1(M) corridor partly following the route of the ancient Great North Road. Settlement is limited to a few large towns on key routes, and to compact nucleated valley villages of rural character.

The westernmost edge of the landscape unit lies on the boundary with NCA 110: Chilterns.

Local (District)

Area 215: Wymondley – Titmore Green. Relevant key characteristics are given below.

Summary description from North Hertfordshire District LCA

- 4.8 The district character area is identified in the LCA as a rolling chalk landscape, often of intimate scale, with a historic settlement pattern linked by winding lanes, in close proximity to strategic transport corridors such as the A1(M) and A602. A settled character is created by small scattered hamlets and farmsteads often using traditional vernacular materials.
- 4.9 The North Hertfordshire District Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study identifies the character areas as being of low to moderate landscape sensitivity due to the degradation created by infrastructure corridors. However, the study also identifies the importance of the enclosed character created by the gently undulating farmland. In visual terms, the character area is identified as having a low sensitivity, due to the degradation of views by infrastructure features.

Policy context and designations; relationship to designated landscape interests

- 4.10 There are no designated landscapes within the part of the character area covered by the landscape unit.

Landscape functions

- 4.11 The principal function of this area is that of pony paddocks and horse grazed pasture. It is accessed via a track and gateway off the Chantry Lane roundabout to the south.

Sensitivity analysis

Criteria	Comment
Landscape	
Landform and topography	A gently sloping landform associated with low ridges and valleys and the foothills of the Chilterns, sloping down to the east. There is otherwise little landform variation across the landscape unit, resulting in a relatively low sensitivity to residential development in these terms.
Landscape pattern and complexity	The landscape unit has a simple landscape pattern – grazing pasture sub divided by pony tape and surrounded by dense hedgerows. A more complex pattern persists on the northern boundary, associated with the 19 th century parkland/gardenesque planting of Wymondley Bury. These and elements such as the field oaks within the landscape unit increase sensitivity to residential development in terms of landscape pattern. Aspects such as the pylon line however reduce sensitivity.
Cultural pattern and time depth	The most sensitive elements relate to the setting the area provides to the grade 1 listed house at Wymondley Bury, a brick cased timber framed aisled hall house of 14 th century origin with later additions. Other aspects of the cultural pattern which would be sensitive to residential development are the 19 th century gardenesque grounds of the Bury which abut the landscape unit’s northern boundary, and the relict field oaks within the unit. These all increase sensitivity to

Criteria	Comment
	<p>residential development.</p> <p>The HLC identifies the landscape unit itself to be defined by modified early enclosures, which would have a degree of sensitivity to residential development.</p>
<p>Settlement and human influences, including relationship to settlement edge</p>	<p>The unit performs an open landscape function, separating the settlements of Little Wymondley to the north and Todd's Green/ Titmore Green to the south of the A605. Also the existing southern settlement edge of Little Wymondley is defined by a coherent and intact vegetated boundary, with Wymondley Bury also well integrated to its surroundings with a clear boundary of mature vegetation increasing the unit's sensitivity to residential development. A line of pylons crosses the landscape unit east –west, decreasing sensitivity.</p>
<p>Perceptual/experiential qualities (colour/texture/light/reflection, movement, tranquillity, remoteness)</p>	<p>The landscape has an urban fringe character due to pylons, the pony paddocks and the close proximity to road and rail infrastructure. These are in marked contrast to aspects which impart an historic/rural experiential character such as the Bury and its grounds/setting, mature field trees and pastoral land use. The elements which erode the experiential character also therefore reduce its sensitivity to residential development.</p>
<p>Visual</p>	
<p>Visual relationships and views (including key vantage points from designated landscapes)</p>	<p>Views are largely filtered due to the density of the boundary and intervening vegetation, although some open views over farmland persist to the east (gaps in hedgerow vegetation). The A602 and the northern edge of Stevenage (prominent buildings of the Lister Hospital) form occasional elements of such views. The general degree of visual containment otherwise reduces the sensitivity to residential development in visual terms.</p>
<p>Level of intervisibility: With other landscape character areas and settlements</p>	<p>There is a degree of filtered intervisibility with the adjacent landscape unit to the east and to more elevated farmland within the wider landscape character area to the east.</p> <p>The A602 and the northern edge of Stevenage (prominent buildings of the Lister Hospital) form occasional elements of intermittent views to the east. The pylon line is a dominant feature in views and of skylines, reducing sensitivity to residential development.</p>
<p>Overall landscape sensitivity</p>	<p>Justification and judgement</p> <p>Overall landscape sensitivity to possible residential development is judged to be low-moderate. This is due to the eroded character created by the pylon line, urban fringe uses (paddocks) and the close presence of large scale transport infrastructure such as the A602, and due to the generally high degree of visual containment. It is however recognised within this overall judgement that there are sensitive elements such its role as the setting to the grade 1 listed Wymondley Bury, particularly the northern and eastern side of the unit.</p>

Landscape guidance and recommendations

4.12 Key recommendations for this landscape unit are:

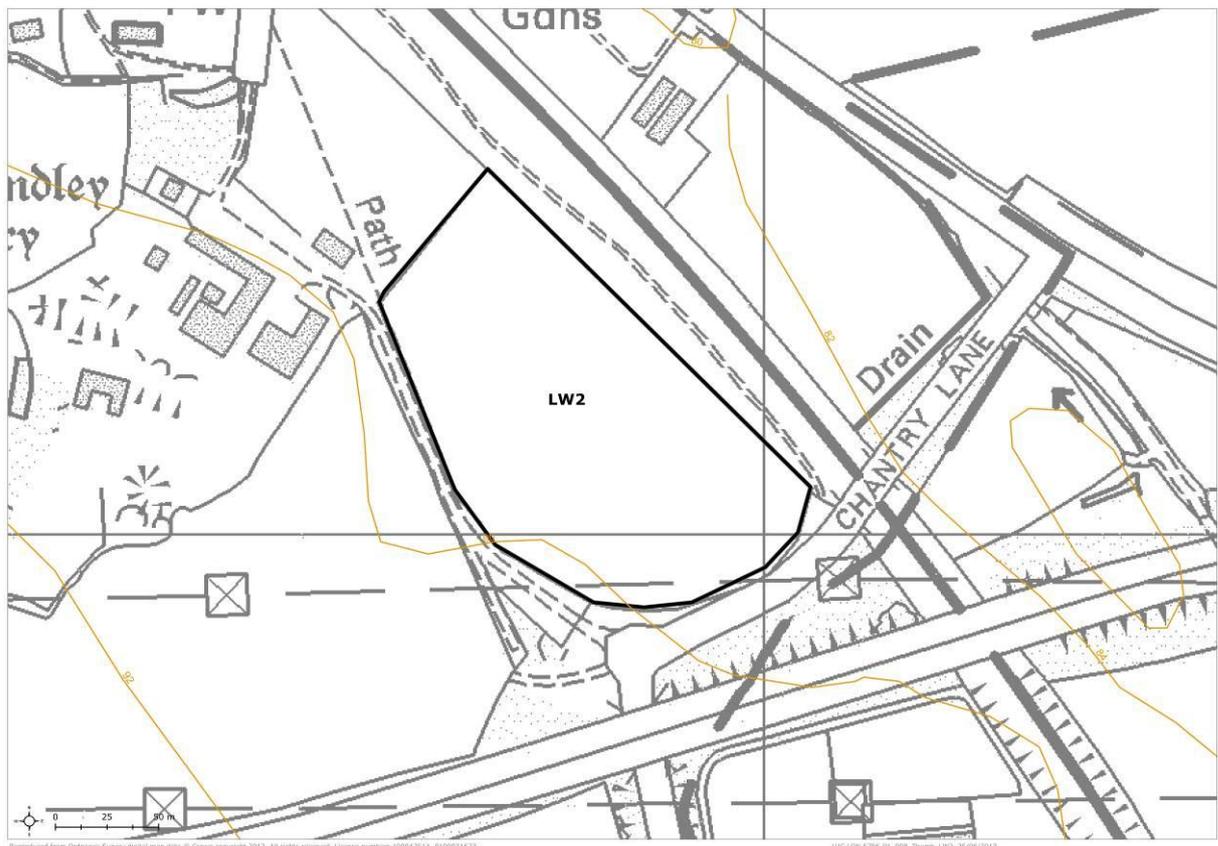
- Practical site constraints including the pylon lines across the site mean that in reality development in this unit is unlikely to be viable, and also in cultural heritage terms, due to the setting the unit provides to Wymondley Bury.
- In terms of landscape and visual sensitivity alone, the area could potentially accommodate some development due to its containment, provided it retained the existing strong landscape framework, and maintained the strong visual containment. The eastern boundary should be reinforced through additional native planting. Enhancement of landscape structure (such as hedgerow planting) should be used to secure greater landscape and access links to the proposed Stevenage greenway (North Herts GI Plan) on the western boundary.

Landscape character unit: LW2

Baseline

Location

- 4.13 This landscape unit is located immediately east of the southern approach drive to Wymondley Bury, between the drive and the railway line to the east. To the north west are the grounds of Wymondley Bury, and to the south, Chantry Lane, beyond a dense boundary hedgerow.



LCA context

National

Area 87: East Anglian Chalk. A distinctive and open topography (a continuation of the Chilterns) and large scale chalk downland, now mainly under arable cultivation. The landscape is cut by minor chalk river valleys such as the Ivel and the Rhee and crossed by long straight roads and ancient Roman routes such as the Icknield Way, with the A1 and A1(M) corridor partly following the route of the ancient Great North Road. Settlement is limited to a few large towns on key routes, and to compact nucleated valley villages of rural character.

Local (District)

Area 215: Wymondley – Titmore Green. Relevant key characteristics are given below.

Summary description from North Hertfordshire District LCA

- 4.14 The district character area is identified in the LCA as a rolling chalk landscape, often of intimate scale, with a historic settlement pattern linked by winding lanes, in close proximity to strategic transport corridors such as the A1(M) and A602. A settled character is created by small scattered hamlets and farmsteads often using traditional vernacular materials.
- 4.15 The North Hertfordshire District Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study identifies the character areas as being of low to moderate landscape sensitivity due to the degradation created by infrastructure corridors. However, the study also identifies the importance of the enclosed character created by the gently undulating farmland. In visual terms, the character area is identified as having a low sensitivity, due to the degradation of views by infrastructure features.

Policy context and designations; relationship to designated landscape interests

- 4.16 There are no designated landscapes within the part of the character area covered by the landscape unit.

Landscape functions

- 4.17 The principal function of this area is that of pony paddocks and horse grazed pasture. It is accessed via the Chantry Lane roundabout to the south.

Sensitivity analysis

Criteria	Comment
Landscape	
Landform and topography	A gently sloping topography, with land falling eastwards towards the railway line. There is otherwise little other distinction or landform variation sensitive to residential development.
Landscape pattern and complexity	A simple landscape pattern is created by the land use of horse grazed pasture, and the mixed hedgerows (hazel, elder, thorn), which define the boundaries of the landscape unit – a dense hedgerow associated with the bypass and alterations to Chantry Lane road layout, to the south and a patchy hedgerow which defines the western boundary. None of these elements in themselves are particularly sensitive to residential development. Sensitivity is reduced by elements of the landscape pattern which erode character, such as the pylon line which runs east west across the southernmost half of the landscape unit.
Cultural pattern and time depth	The HLC identifies the landscape of the unit to be mainly the legacy of 20 th century agricultural practice, and there are no other designated heritage assets on the site. Sensitivity to residential development is however increased in the northern half of the landscape unit due to its peripheral role as part of the setting of the grade 1 listed Wymondley Bury, although

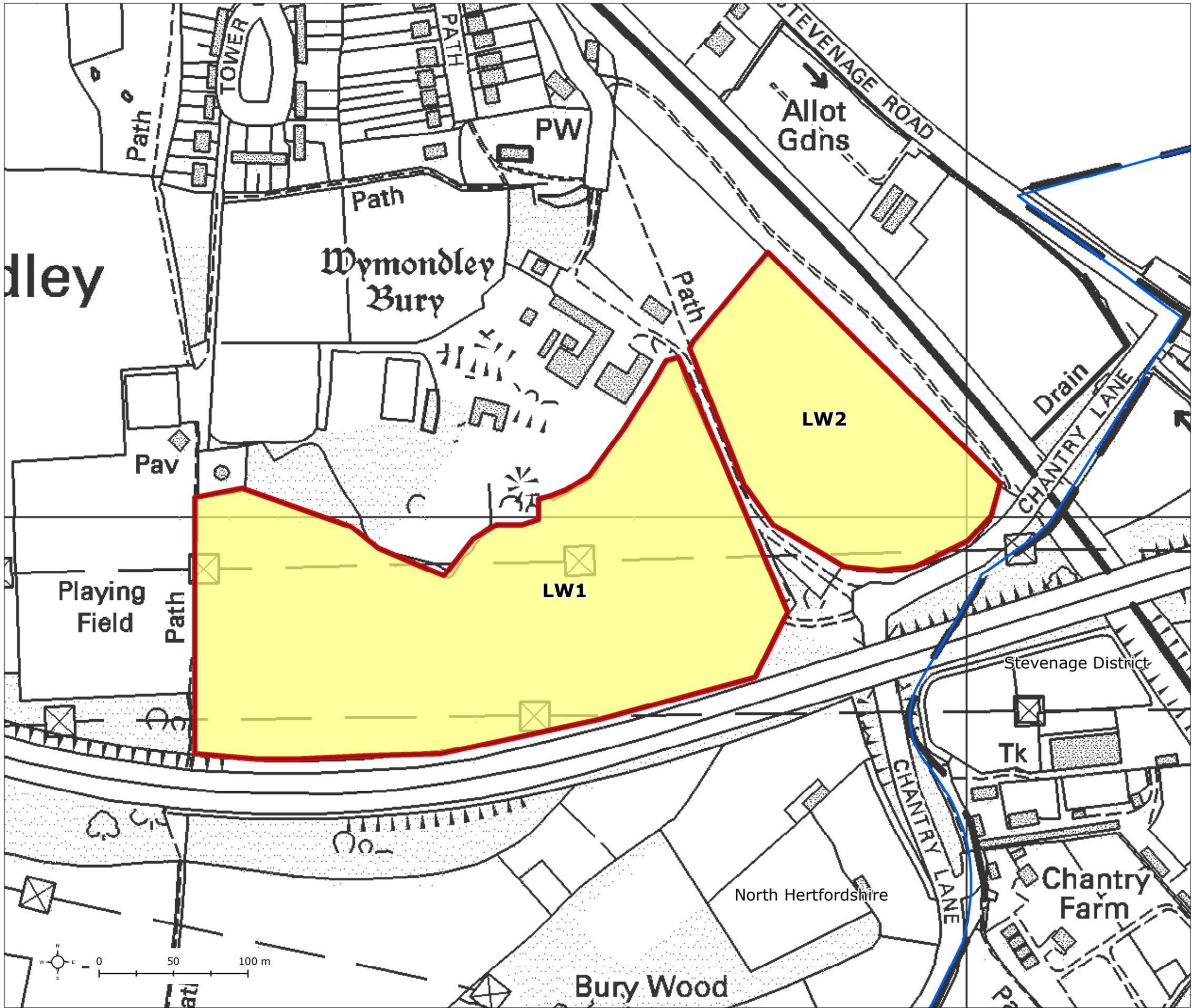
Criteria	Comment
	this is less significant than for landscape unit LW1.
Settlement and human influences, including relationship to settlement edge	Aspects of settlement pattern are Wymondley Bury and associated out buildings and barn conversions, with the settlement edge of Little Wymondley predominantly masked by hedgerows, trees and the wooded grounds of the Bury itself. However, the site has many visual associations with settlement and associated infrastructure, with the A602 bypass in close proximity to the south (flyover), plus the pylon line and railway, all of which reduce the site's sensitivity to residential development.
Perceptual/experiential qualities (colour/texture/light/reflection, movement, tranquillity, remoteness)	The landscape unit has a marked urban fringe influence due to the neglected quality imparted by the absence of field boundary management and the horse grazing. This is heightened by the presence of the railway and associated overhead catenary lines, by the overhead power lines to the west, the substation on site and the pylon line to the south. These and the aural presence of the A602 to the south further reduce the landscape unit's sensitivity to residential development.
Visual	
Visual relationships and views (including key vantage points from designated landscapes)	Open views are afforded to the rolling landscape to the east beyond the railway line. The Lister Hospital on the northern edge of Stevenage also forms a prominent feature of views from the higher ground within the landscape unit. Open views would be most sensitive to residential development. Most other parts of the unit exhibit a strong sense of visual containment due to landform and field boundary vegetation, reducing sensitivity to residential development in visual terms. This degree of screening extends to Wymondley Bury, which is largely masked from view within the landscape unit when trees are in leaf. Overhead power lines and telegraph poles in views towards the landscape unit reduce the unit's sensitivity to residential development.
Level of intervisibility: With other landscape character areas and settlements	As described above, the unit has part intervisibility with the edge of Stevenage (Lister Hospital) to the south east. It also has intervisibility with the rolling chalk landforms and arable landscapes of the wider landscape character area, to the east (and attendant largely undeveloped skylines to the east). This increases sensitivity to residential development in intervisibility terms, although sensitivity is otherwise relatively low due to the level of visual containment in other parts of the landscape unit.
Overall landscape sensitivity	Justification and judgement Overall landscape sensitivity of this unit to possible residential development is judged to be low-moderate . This is due to the eroded character and presence of urban fringe elements such as transport infrastructure, pylons and overhead power lines. This judgement is also due to the due to the simplicity of the landscape pattern and the general degree of visual containment, although the open character of the eastern

Criteria	Comment
	<p>boundary and associated intervisibility with the wider landscape, is noted here.</p> <p>Within this judgement, it should also be noted that development of LW2 alone would not relate well to established settlement pattern, and would also potentially represent an over development of the small scale, loose settlement form of Little Wymondley.</p>

Landscape guidance and recommendations

4.18 Key recommendations for this landscape unit are:

- Retain and enhance vegetated boundaries as much as possible, particularly those of intact hedgerow and trees. Proposals, where possible, should seek to restore local landscape structure through appropriate planting.
- Ensure any proposed development reflects the scale of the local area, including the local context of the Grade I listed Wymondley Bury and the village of Little Wymondley. Any development should also relate appropriately to the orientation of the landform and topography.
- Any proposed development should appropriately consider potential visual impacts for the open rolling landscape east of the site (exploration of additional landscape structure to the eastern boundary of the unit)
- Enhance accessibility of the public right of way to the north west of the character unit.



Landscape Sensitivity Study for Little Wymondley

Figure 4.2

Landscape Sensitivity Ratings

- Study Area
- Local Authority boundaries
- Sensitivity Rating
- Low - Moderate



5 Summary and conclusions

- 5.1 This section sets out the conclusions and recommendations in relation to development within land to the south of Little Wymondley, in response to the sensitivity analysis presented at **section 4**.
- 5.2 The sensitivity analysis indicates that both landscape units have a **low-moderate** sensitivity to residential development, although LW1 is more compromised due to its relative elevation/slightly greater visual prominence and its role as open space between the settlements of Little Wymondley and Todd's Green, as well as the setting to Wymondley Bury. The issues of landscape function in addition to practical constraints such as the pylon lines mean that LW1 is not considered viable for residential development, and it is therefore not appropriate to calculate an estimation of potential number of dwellings.
- 5.3 LW2 has the fewest constraints to development in landscape and visual terms. This unit could yield up to 72 dwellings at a net residential density of 30 dph (equating to 36 dwellings at gross density of 15 dph²), or 97 dwellings at net density of 40 dph (equating to 48 at a gross density of 20 dph). These figures would be reduced by approximately 7 dwellings at 30dph net/4 dwellings at 15dph gross (or 9 dwellings at 40dph net/5 dwellings at 20dph gross) to allow for additional native landscape planting to a depth of 10m to the eastern boundary, to contain visual impacts.
- 5.4 However development of LW2 alone would not relate well to established settlement pattern, and would also potentially represent an over development of the small scale, loose settlement form of Little Wymondley.

² Gross residential density includes all supporting infrastructure such as highways, whilst net relates to residential plot footprint only.

Appendix 1: Field survey form template

Criteria (and supporting survey prompts)	Landscape values, comments and judgements		Landscape guidance and opportunities (if applicable)
LANDSCAPE			
<u>Landscape scale:</u> Presence/absence of human scale features Presence or absence of enclosing elements Field pattern, form and size			
<u>Landform:</u> Scarp slopes Ridge and valley U shaped valley Rolling/undulating/flat Level of landform variation Gradient/slope			

<p><u>Landscape pattern and complexity:</u></p> <p><u>Cultural/time depth:</u></p> <p>Field pattern/earthworks</p> <p>Settlement influences</p> <p>Manors/parkland/estates/parks and gardens</p> <p>SAMs</p> <p>Roman roads</p> <p>Sunken lanes</p> <p><u>Landscape structure:</u></p> <p>Enclosure pattern</p> <p>Vegetation types, age and scale, density</p> <p>Habitats</p> <p>Colour/texture</p> <p><u>Others:</u></p> <p><u>Evidence of geological exposure</u></p> <p><u>Hydrology:</u></p> <p>Chalk rivers/streams</p> <p>Springs</p> <p>Seasonal winterbourne/'gutter'</p>			
---	--	--	--

<p><u>Settlement and human influences:</u></p> <p>Age of settlement</p> <p>Form, whether nucleated, linear/dispersed</p> <p>Scale</p> <p>Density and massing</p> <p>Materials palette</p> <p>Character of roads</p> <p>Settlement edge – characteristics/nature of</p>			
<p><u>Skyline character:</u></p> <p>Open/framed/screened</p> <p>Settled/developed</p> <p>Landmarks</p>			

<p><u>Perceptual qualities/experience:</u></p> <p>Colour and texture</p> <p>Light and reflection</p> <p>Movement</p> <p>Tranquillity</p> <p>Remoteness</p> <p>Rarity (from LCA description)</p> <p>Condition/management</p>			
<p><i>VISUAL</i></p>			
<p>Visual relationships and views:</p> <p>Nature of views, whether open/expansive, framed, foiled, glimpsed or screened</p> <p>Intervisibility with adjacent landscape units</p>			
<p>Overall sensitivity judgement and comments:</p>			