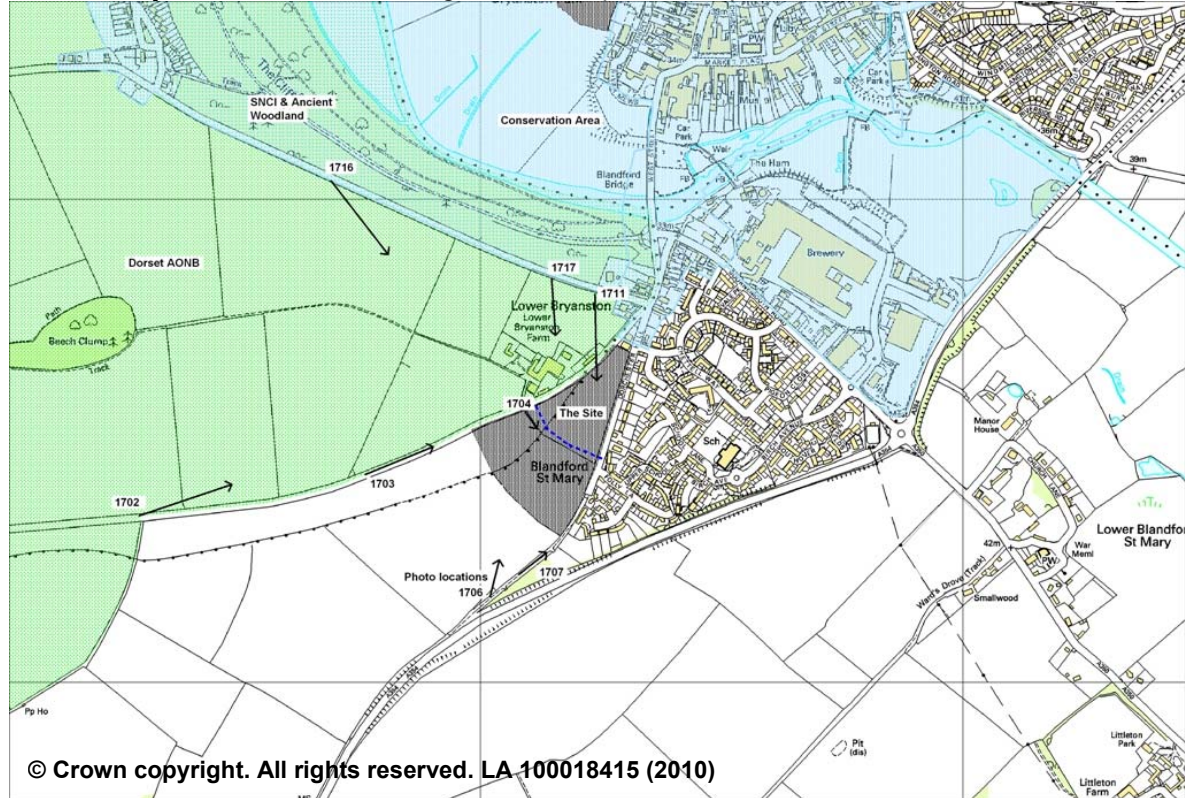


North Dorset District Council
Proposed Housing Sites
Landscape Impact Assessment: Assessment template

NB: See methodology notes attached

Site name: <i>Blandford St Mary</i> Proposed housing nos: 150	NDDC Ref: 2/03/0540	Date: 14 July 2010
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Location plan: with relevant designations and photo viewpoints



Key Characteristics: These are the key positive features or qualities, which if lost or changed there would be a significant consequence for the current character of the landscape

- ◆ *The site forms part of the South Blandford Downs Landscape Character Area¹ which is part of the open, chalk downland landscape type².*
- ◆ *A small part of the downland landscape with a more enclosed and intimate scale.*
- ◆ *A series of relatively steep, north-east facing pony paddocks/grazing land and an arable field.*
- ◆ *Bounded by dense hedgerows along Dorchester Hill and Fairmile Road.*
- ◆ *The old, tall, mature and grown-out hedgerows sub-divide the site into distinctive small units.*
- ◆ *There are open views into the site from New Road to the north and the public right of way off New Road across Lower Bryanston Farm.*
- ◆ *Other views into the site are limited by existing development and dense boundary hedgerows.*

¹ North Dorset District Council Landscape Character Assessment dated Nov 2007.

² Dorset County Council Landscape Character Assessment dated Nov 2009.

- ◆ *The more exposed southern end of the site is open to wider views due to its elevation.*
- ◆ *The site sits within the context of existing development off Fairmile Road and the new development along the eastern side of Dorchester Hill.*
- ◆ *The site's north-west boundary along Fairmile Road abuts the Dorset AONB.*

Summary of overall character: based on scale, landform, pattern/complexity, settlement & human influences, skyline, visual relationships & views, intervisibility, perceptual/aesthetic criteria.

The site forms part of the South Blandford Downs Landscape Character Area which, in turn, is part of the undulating, rolling, open chalk downland landscape which extends south of Blandford.

The site is a small part of the downland landscape but of a much smaller scale and intimacy abutting the Dorset AONB along its north-western edge. It is a relatively steep, north-east facing slope and used for grazing, pony paddocks and arable farmland. It is bounded by dense hedgerows along Dorchester Hill and Fairmile Road. There are two lines of old hedgerows which have grown up and matured to form distinctive and important landscape features which help to sub-divide the site. They form part of the planned enclosure of the downland in post medieval times. There are open views into the site from New Road to the north and from the public right of way off New Road which crosses Lower Bryanston Farm. Other views into the site are limited by existing development and dense boundary hedgerows. The more elevated and exposed southern end of the site, which is arable field is more open to wider views. The site context is within the setting of existing hedgerows, trees and development off Fairmile Road, as well as being within the context of more recent development along the eastern side of Dorchester Hill.

Sensitivities/vulnerabilities: to include threats to key characteristics. Assumes no mitigation measures; which are outlined below.

- ◆ *Development would impact on a series of undeveloped paddocks and farmland, and potentially impact on the important trees, hedgerows and copses within and around the site.*
- ◆ *Development would be on green field land adjacent to the AONB and would have some negative impact on the character and setting of this designation and its landscape character.*
- ◆ *Development on the elevated part of the site would have a greater negative impact on the character and setting of the AONB and its landscape character.*

Value: based on AONB status (including setting of AONB), wildlife, public 'good' (access/enjoyment & amenity value), setting for the wider settlement, historic value (see EH Conservation Principles)

The site abuts the Dorset AONB and has an impact on its setting and therefore has a high sensitivity rating. It also has some amenity value as open, undeveloped green field land and the trees and hedgerows have some important wildlife value.

Sensitivity Analysis: this takes the form of a 'guidance statement' informed by scale, landform, pattern/complexity, settlement & human influences, skyline, visual relationships & views, intervisibility, perceptual/aesthetic criteria which will outline opportunities for mitigation/enhancement.

If development was located away from the more elevated and exposed parts of the site (within the southern arable field) this would minimise the identified impacts on landscape character and the AONB. If development could also ensure the retention, protection and management of the key mature old hedgerows crossing the site and those which border it, this would also help minimise impacts. This network of vegetation would provide a mature framework within which development could 'sit'. The fact that from key views into the site from New Road, development would not break the skyline (due to the rising landform and the existing development to the south-east), is a key factor in mitigating identified impacts. The framework of mature vegetation and existing development off Fairmile Road also provides a backdrop and context/setting for any new development which would, in turn, help integrate it. In other words such development would be within the context of the existing pattern of development on this edge of Blandford (the blue dotted line on the above plan indicates the recommended south-west extent of any future development). The use of SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems) and other sustainable construction techniques should be explored for this site. The development of the strategic Landscape Masterplan for the site is essential and should be developed 'up front' prior to any future planning application based on the Poole, Dorset and Bournemouth Landscape and Development checklist dated Feb 2008.

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