

Land at Higher Blandford Road, Shaftesbury

A Preliminary Review

On behalf of Shaftesbury LVA LLP and Land Value Alliances

June 2014



■ Site boundary



Above: An aerial photograph of the site in context

Introduction

Background

This preliminary review considers the development potential of land at Higher Blandford Road on the south eastern fringe of Shaftesbury in North Dorset. The report has been prepared by PCL Planning, PCL Transport and Clifton Emery design on behalf of Shaftesbury LVA LLP and Land Value Alliances.

The review explains the reasons why the site should be brought forward for the development of a mixed use scheme comprising housing and commercial uses.

It illustrates a preliminary layout (in appendix 4), outlines the planning context for the development, and provides an overview explaining suitability of development on the site from a landscape perspective.

Context

Shaftesbury is a market town within North Dorset. Its hilltop location has severely restricted growth of the town except to the east where the town has expanded on flat plateau land.

The existing and emerging local plans recognise the potential for expansion at Shaftesbury is limited by environmental (mainly landscape and biodiversity) constraints and the limited number of potential developable sites where the town could expand further.

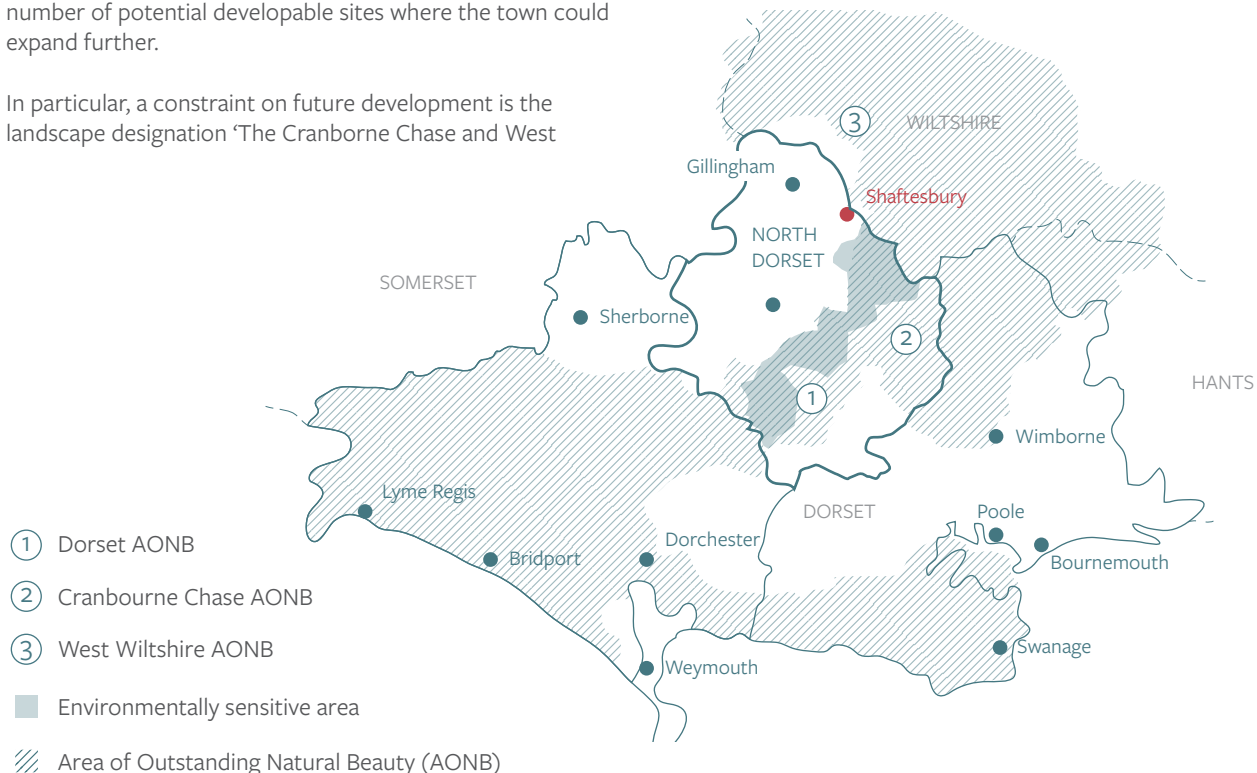
In particular, a constraint on future development is the landscape designation 'The Cranborne Chase and West

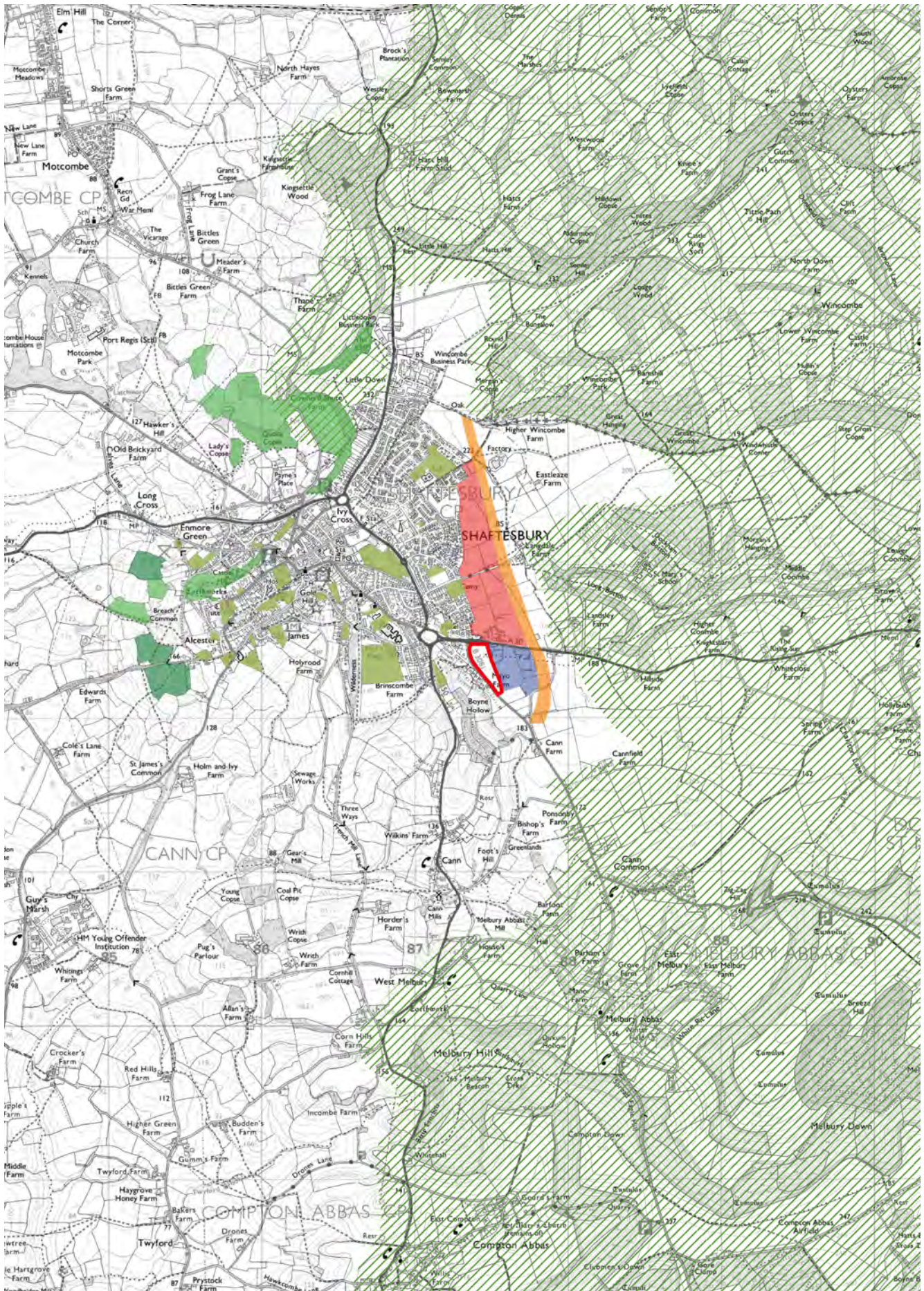
Wiltshire Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' (AONB) designated by the Countryside Commission in 1983.

Furthermore, the future growth of the town in an easterly direction is restricted by the reserved corridor for a proposed outer bypass for the town.

In recent years growth at Shaftesbury has primarily been on land to the east of the town that was allocated in the 2003 plan. Land was proposed for development to the north of the A30 (Salisbury Road). The Inspector, when considering objections to that plan recommended that the proposed allocation be reviewed to accommodate further development to the south of the A30 (Salisbury Road). In making this recommendation the Inspector made no reference to any landscape constraints, nor did he differentiate between any areas of land to the south of the A30 (Salisbury Road).

In response to this recommendation the Council allocated an additional area of land to the south of the A30 (Salisbury Road) for employment use. A plan of the allocated areas is attached as Appendix 1 (Pg 4). This allocation adjoins our client's site.





Above: Appendix 1 - Local Plan Allocation

Analysis

The local plan text makes references to our clients' site and the importance of views towards Melbury Beacon to the south of the site:

“Although it was another principle arising from the Enquiry by Design process that the employment allocation to the south of the A30 should be deleted, this conflicts with a specific recommendation of the Local Plan Inspector. He stated that the allocation should instead be extended to the south and west. It is considered that there will be an ongoing need to accommodate larger industrial type developments (class B2), which could not be satisfactorily included within the development to the north of the A30. Therefore in accordance with the Inspector’s recommendation, the allocation has been extended further to the south to ensure a sufficient land supply, although land to the west remains outside of the settlement boundary in order to protect the long range views to Melbury Beacon. Extensive landscaping on the western and south boundaries of the development will also ensure that this remains the case” (paragraph 27.4.2 of the adopted local plan).

It is important to note that text to the local plan is not saved and no longer forms part of the development plan. It is also notable that the local plan Inspector, when recommending that the Council look at allocating additional land to the south and west of the proposed allocation to the north of the A30 (Salisbury Road) did not suggest that our client’s site was any more or less significant in landscape terms than the land now allocated for employment purposes and no comment was made upon views towards Melbury Beacon.

A ‘Development Brief (including design statement and masterplan) Land to the Eastern side of Shaftesbury’ (2003) was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the local plan in 2003.

Land to the north of the A30 was granted planning permission by the Secretary of State in 2007. The Inspector’s report discussed the landscape implications of that development proposal. The Inspector determined that:

“The AONB landscape in the vicinity of Shaftesbury is characterised by the intimate valleys of the Donheads and Coombes and the rising chalk uplands south and south east of the town [6,7]. There is no high ground to the east from where views from the application sites might easily be obtained. Yet a series of clear but distant views are available of the town and application sites from locations on high ground to the south and south east [7]. As the existing build-up area is discernable

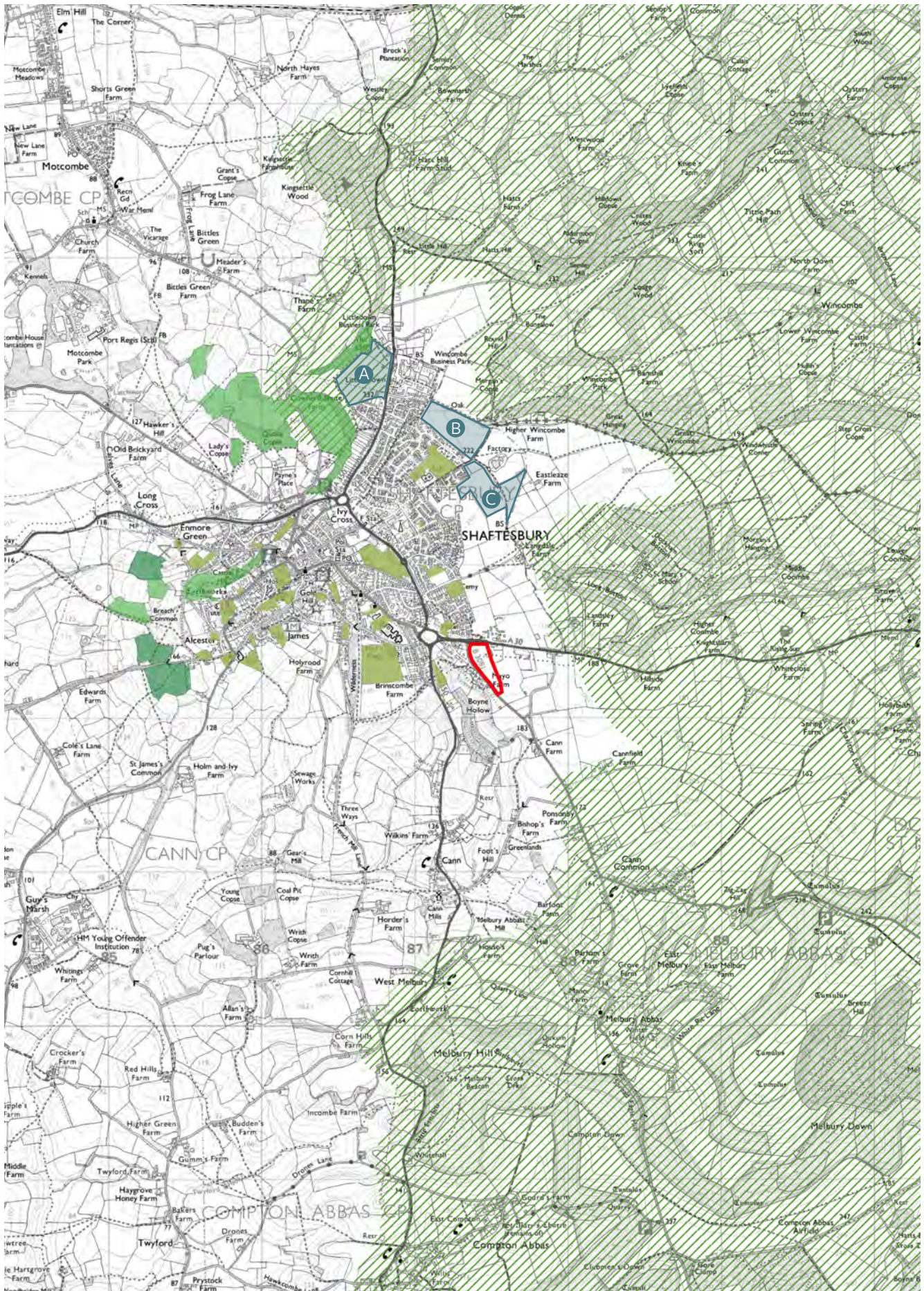
from these locations, so would the proposed development be visible as an entity. However visibility does not necessarily equate to visual harm. I am satisfied in these circumstances that the proposed development whilst resulting in a noticeable extension to Shaftesbury, would be closely identified with the existing built-up area and would have no material effect on the natural beauty of the AONB, its general sense of remoteness, or on views into or out of the designated area.”

The allocated employment site was granted outline planning permission for the erection of employment development of B1 and B2 uses with ancillary B8 use, all with associated infrastructure and landscaping including strategic landscaping to the east and south and the formation of vehicular access from A30 in 2011. The inter-relationship of this site with Melbury Beacon was not discussed in the case officer report.

There are no identified significant public vantage sites within the urban boundary of Shaftesbury where views towards Melbury Beacon are identified. It has not been demonstrated by the Council which views towards Melbury Beacon are important and why. Our assessment has failed to identify any such important views.

The site does not lie in the AONB, nor does it form part of any locally designated area of landscape importance or ‘Important Open or Wooded Areas’ identified on the proposals map which forms part of the adopted local plan. If the site was an important open area in its own right, or views across the site were particularly important, the Council could have identified this via a local plan designation, however they did not do this.

It is notable that, in preparing the emerging local plan and considering the allocation of further housing development at Shaftesbury, the Council have commissioned a Landscape Impact Assessment of proposed SHLAA sites only – i.e. they have not considered the potential of other land around the edge of the settlement and this is a serious shortcoming. Such a ‘reactive’ approach has meant that the evidence base to the plan has not considered all options to accommodate development needs and is therefore partial. It appears to us that the only reason our site was not considered as part of the council’s landscape impact assessment was that it was not included as part of the SHLAA at the time the landscape impact assessment was carried out.



- Site boundary
- Important Open or Wooded Areas
- Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI)
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Other sites assessed



Above: Local Plan Allocation

Analysis

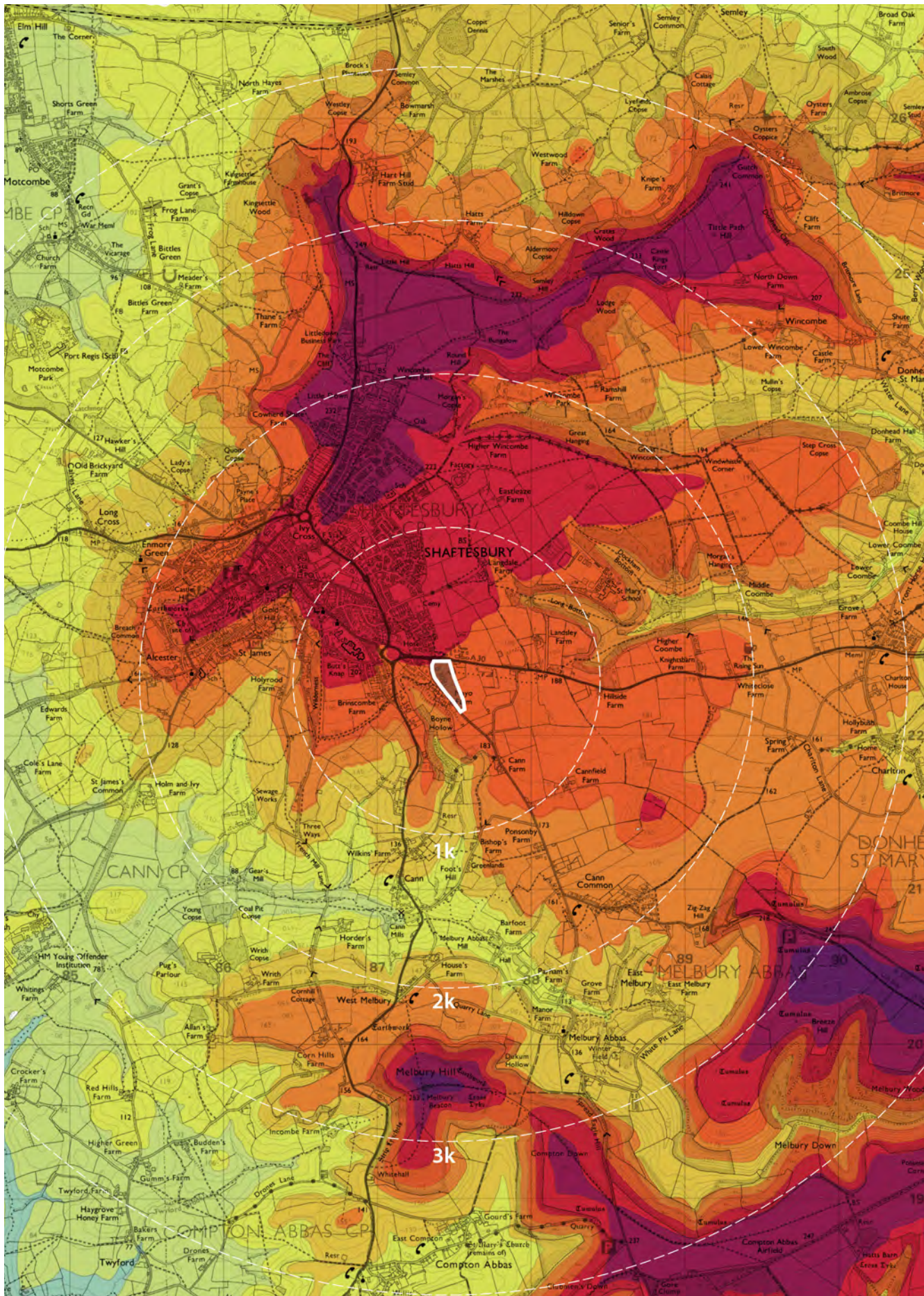
Other sites

In Shaftesbury a total of ten sites were assessed, seven were considered to be sensitive from a landscape and visual point of view for any mitigation to be effective. Three sites were acknowledged as having sensitivity issues, but through careful mitigation could be appropriate for development without having a negative impact on the landscape setting of the town.

The three sites identified are:

- A** Land to the west of the A350 opposite Wincombe Business Park (wholly within the AONB);
- B** Land to the south of Wincombe Business Park;
- C** Land to the south of Wincombe Lane.

It is our conclusion that our client's site is less sensitive than any of these sites.



Above: Appendix 2 -Wider Topography

Analysis

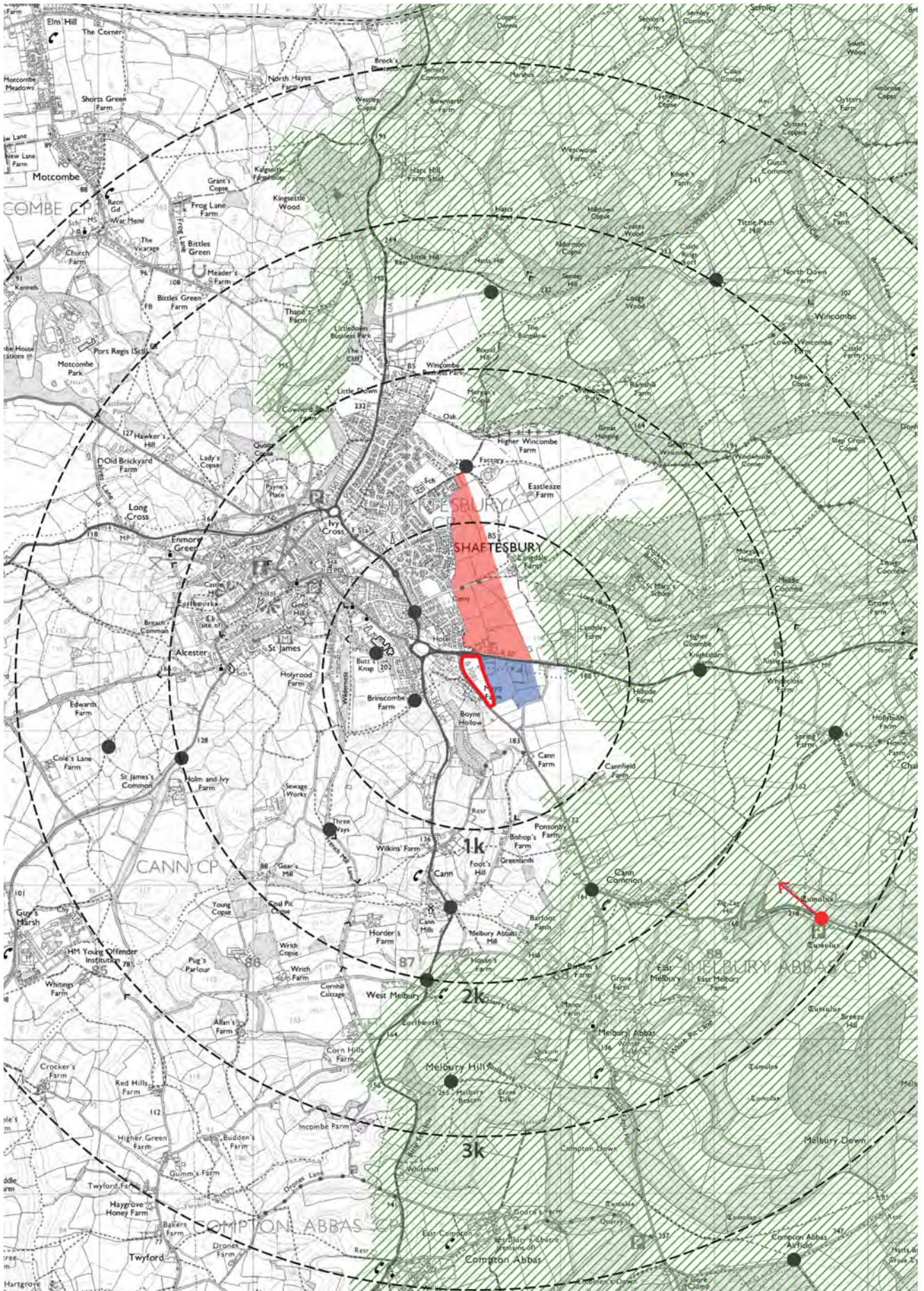
Wider topography

The site lies on the south side of Shaftesbury. Generally the town rises up to the north. When viewed from the south the site is visible from a limited number of vantage points with the town wrapping around it.

The local topography of the area is characterised by the position of Shaftesbury which rises up from surrounding lower land. Hills to the south and south east, including the Beacon represent a distinctive local landform.

Due to the nature of topography in and around the town and the position of built up areas, it is not possible to view the site from areas to the north, east or west. Limited views are possible from the south. These are generally from some distance away and are seen in the context of the built up area of the town.

Local folds in the topography mean that any views that are possible from the south are only possible from higher land to the south.



- Site boundary
- Mixed use
- Employment
- AONB
- Assessed viewpoints
- Illustrated viewpoint

Above: Appendix 3 - Viewpoint Location Plan

Analysis

Photographic viewpoint locations

In order to understand the potential or theoretical visibility of the site within the wider landscape a number of viewpoints have been assessed. This exercise has brought us to the same conclusion as the Planning Inspector reviewing the allocation of employment land adjacent to the site - that it is not possible to view the southern area from many locations.

The illustrated viewpoint is a location where the site can be seen. From here it is seen in the context of the town and from a distance about 2.75 km away on higher ground.

The employment allocation site next to the proposed development site and the land retained for the eastern by-pass would change the setting further when they are developed.

Photographic survey

Photograph 1: B3081

From:

A representative view from the B3081

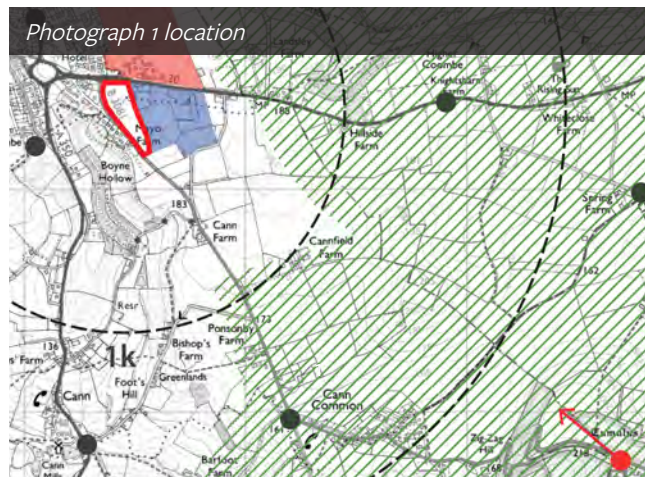
Distance:

About 2.75 km

Description:

The development site can be seen from an informal parking bay on the south side of the B3081. It is seen with the town rising above with the skyline some distance above.

The site appear relatively discrete within the scene and due to the distance involved is difficult to decipher



A30 Photograph

The photo-montage below shows the site viewed from the north side of the A30. Whilst it is possible to see Melbury Beacon in the distance (about 2-3km away) it does not represent a pristine view of the landscape due to the appearance and impact of the A30 corridor in the foreground.

The view to the distant countryside will be further compromised when the site allocated for employment uses immediately to the east of the site is developed in the future.



Panoramic photograph from the site looking south towards Melbury Beacon from the A30

Photograph 1 - A representative view from the B3081





- Site boundary
- Retail
- Hotel
- Restaurant
- Residential
- Trees
- N

Above: Appendix 4 - Illustrative Sketch Layout

The proposal

The proposed development will be a mixed use scheme, retail (Use Class A1) to the northern side of the site adjacent to the A30 with residential (Use Class C3) to the southern part of the site.

The illustrative layout shows a scheme comprising about 2,170 sqm of retail, a restaurant, a 60 bed hotel and in the region of 55 dwellings. The commercial uses are located adjacent to the A30 and residential to the south with access off of Higher Blandford Road. There is a pedestrian link between the different land uses.

The development site is currently laid to pasture. The B3081 runs along its western boundary. There are detached houses in relatively large grounds along the west side of Higher Blandford Road.

The character of the northern part of the site is very much dominated by the A30. The proposal looks to introduce some improvements to the structure and appearance of the public realm through the introduction of new tree planting. Existing development on the neighbouring site to the east also has a significant impact on the appearance of the site.

Whilst it is possible to see the Melbury Beacon to the south across the site the character of the view is dominated by the A30 and associated clutter in the immediate foreground. The view of the Beacon from here is also compromised by the proximity of surrounding development.

An opportunity exists to provide an enhanced and uninterrupted view of the Beacon from a new residential open space in the southern part of the site.

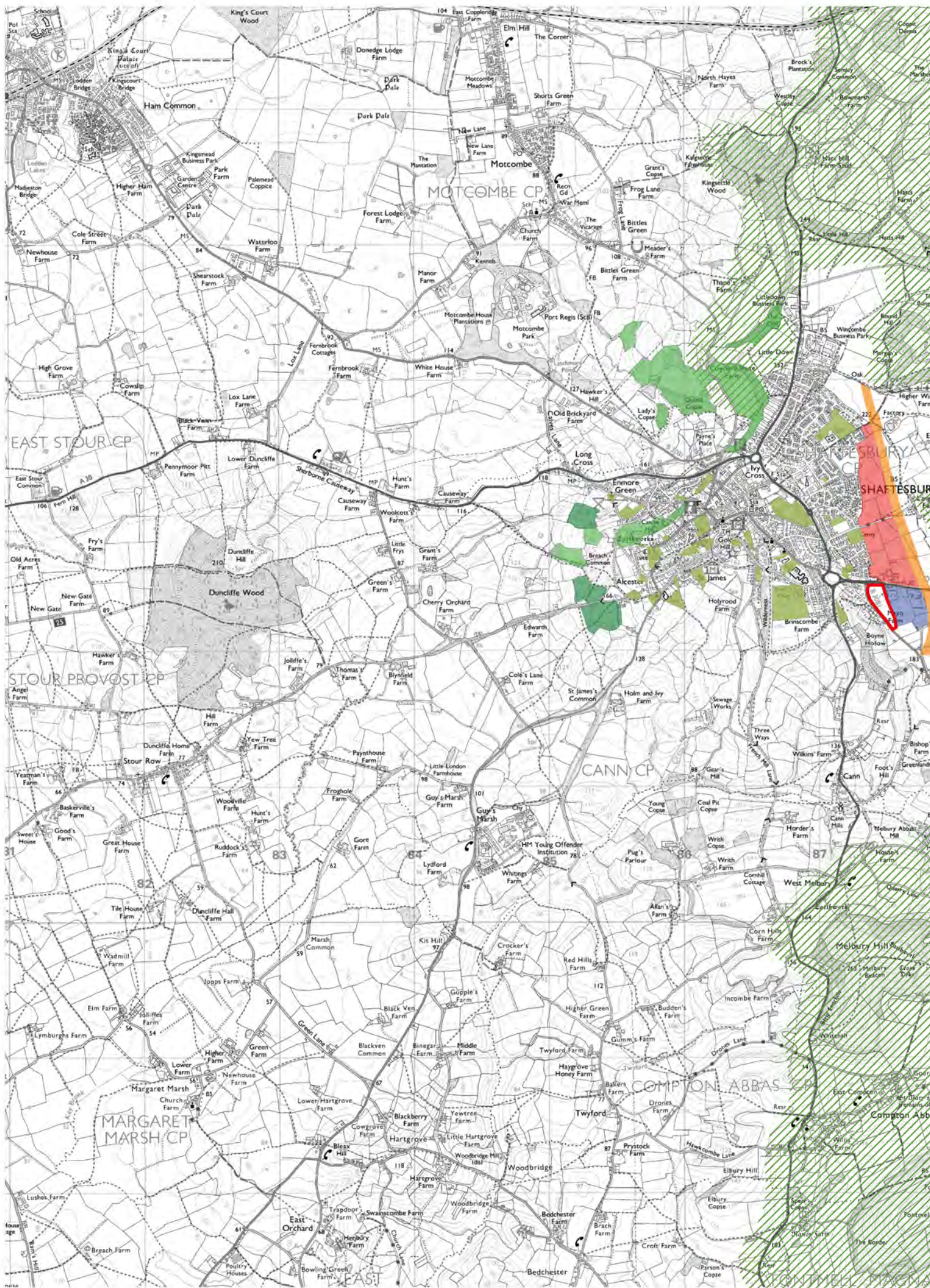
There are very few vantage point to the south from where the site can be clearly seen. Where it is visible it would be seen in the context of the existing town. The site immediately to the east is designated for employment use. When this is developed the built up setting to the site will be even more pronounced.

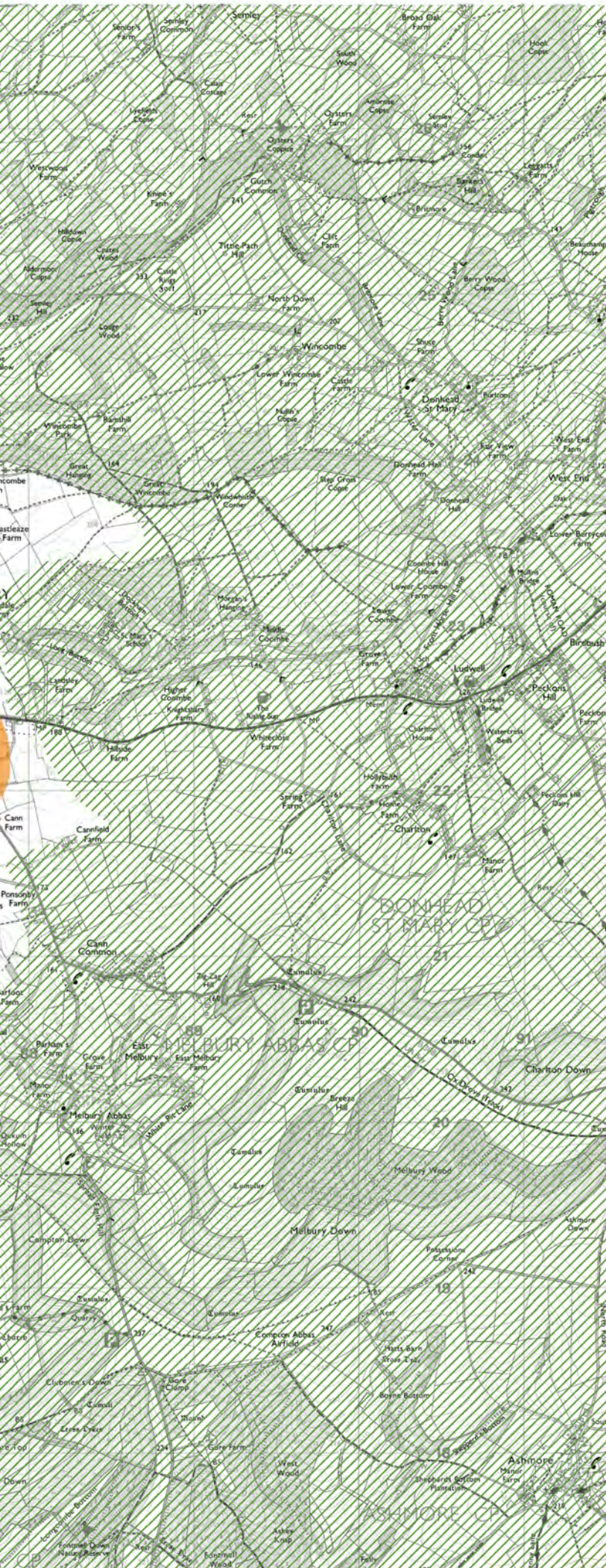
Finally

This review provides an overview of some of the reasons why the land at Higher Blandford Road would be suitable for a mixed use development.

A further more comprehensive study will be submitted to the Local Planning Authority in due course.

- Residential**
50 - 55 dwellings
- Retail A**
1755 sqm (65m x 27m)
Circa 80 parking spaces (100+ possible)
- Hotel**
1680 sqm (60 bed)
Circa 85 parking spaces
- Restaurant**
415 sqm (single storey)
Circa 55 parking spaces
- Retail B**
415 sqm (single storey)
Circa 85 parking spaces





NOTES:



Site boundary



Mixed use predominantly housing
Policies SB 8 - 11
(North Dorset District - Wide Local Plan 1st Revision)



Employment proposal area
Policy SB 12
(North Dorset District - Wide Local Plan 1st Revision)



Outer By-pass / Consultation Corridor
Policy SB 18



Dorset and Cranbourne Chase AONB
(www.magic.gov.uk - June 2014)

Potential viewpoints assessed

Viewpoint illustrated

REV NOTES

DATE

Higher Blandford Road, Shaftesbury
Appendix 1 - Local Plan Allocations

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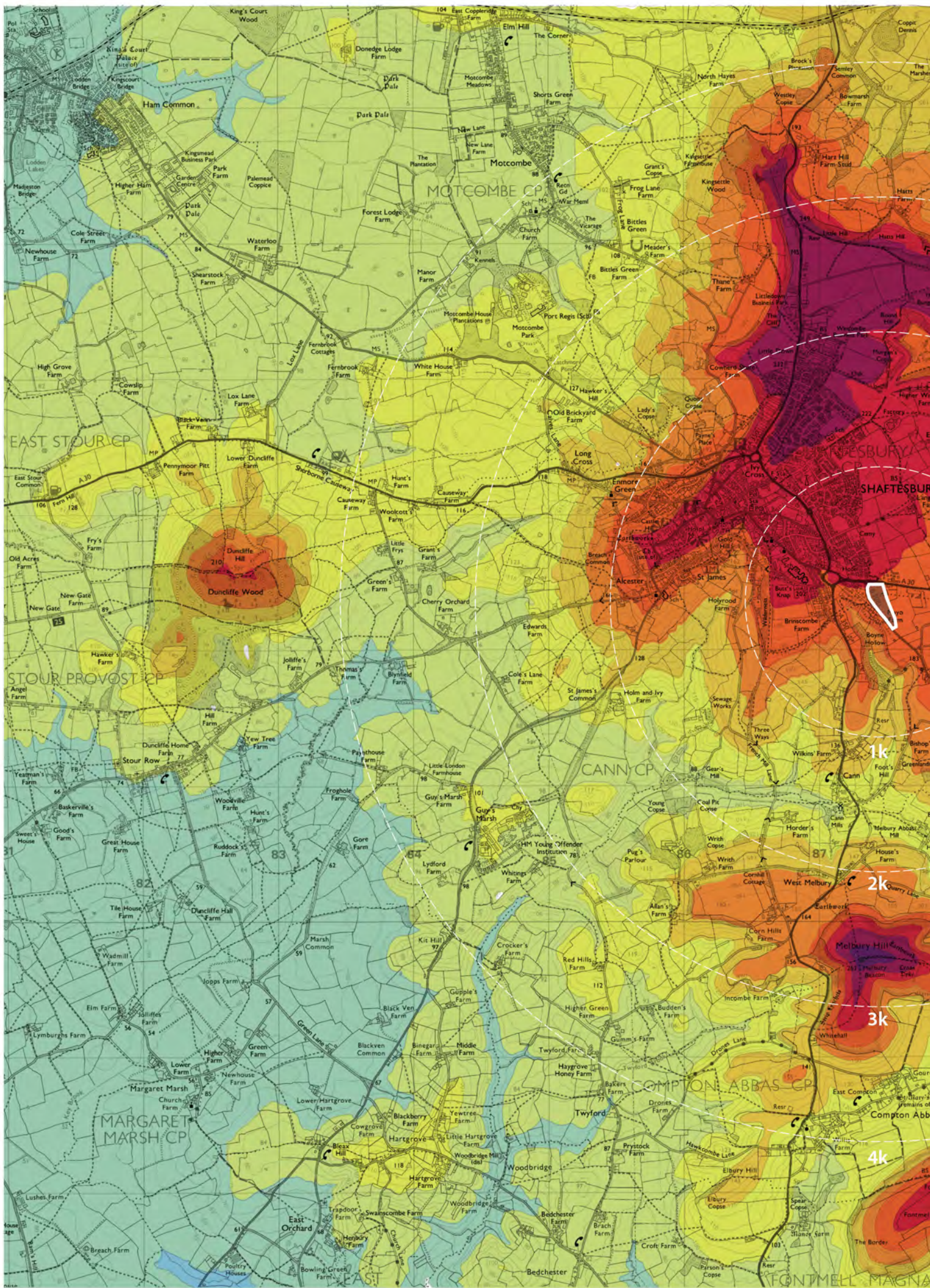
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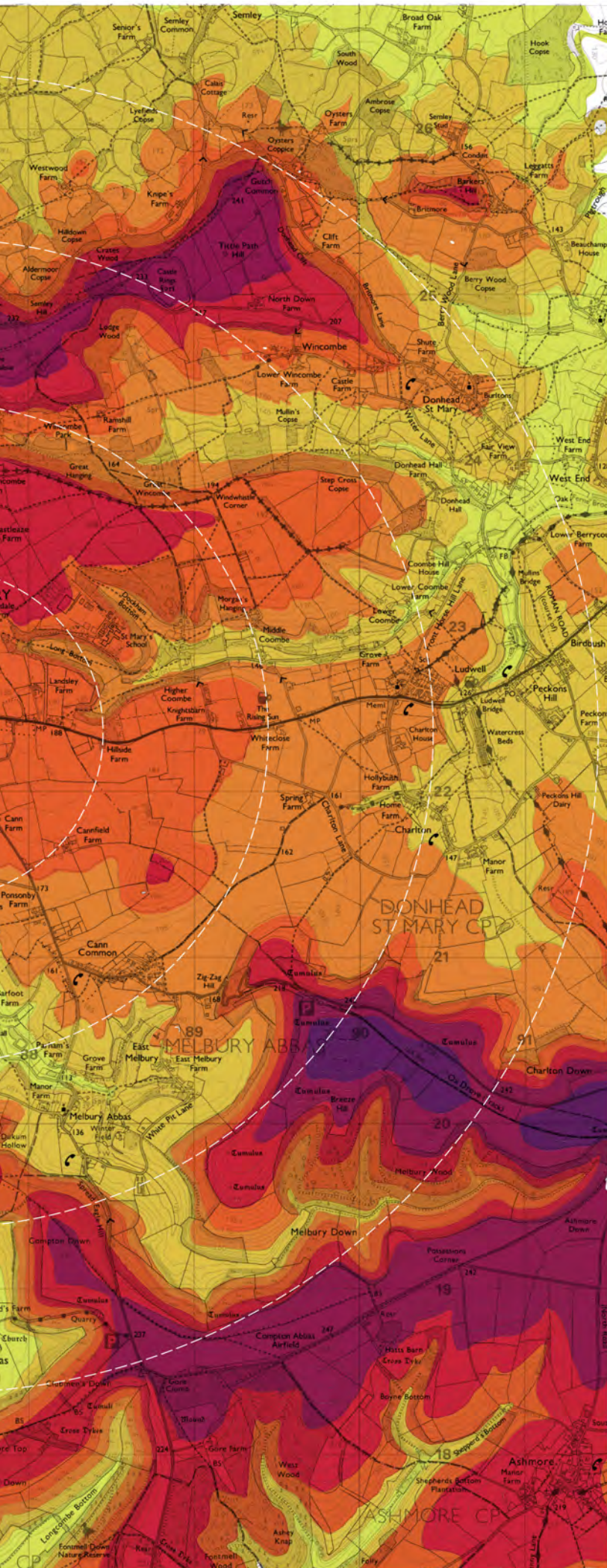
CliftonEmerydesign

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DRAWING STATUS

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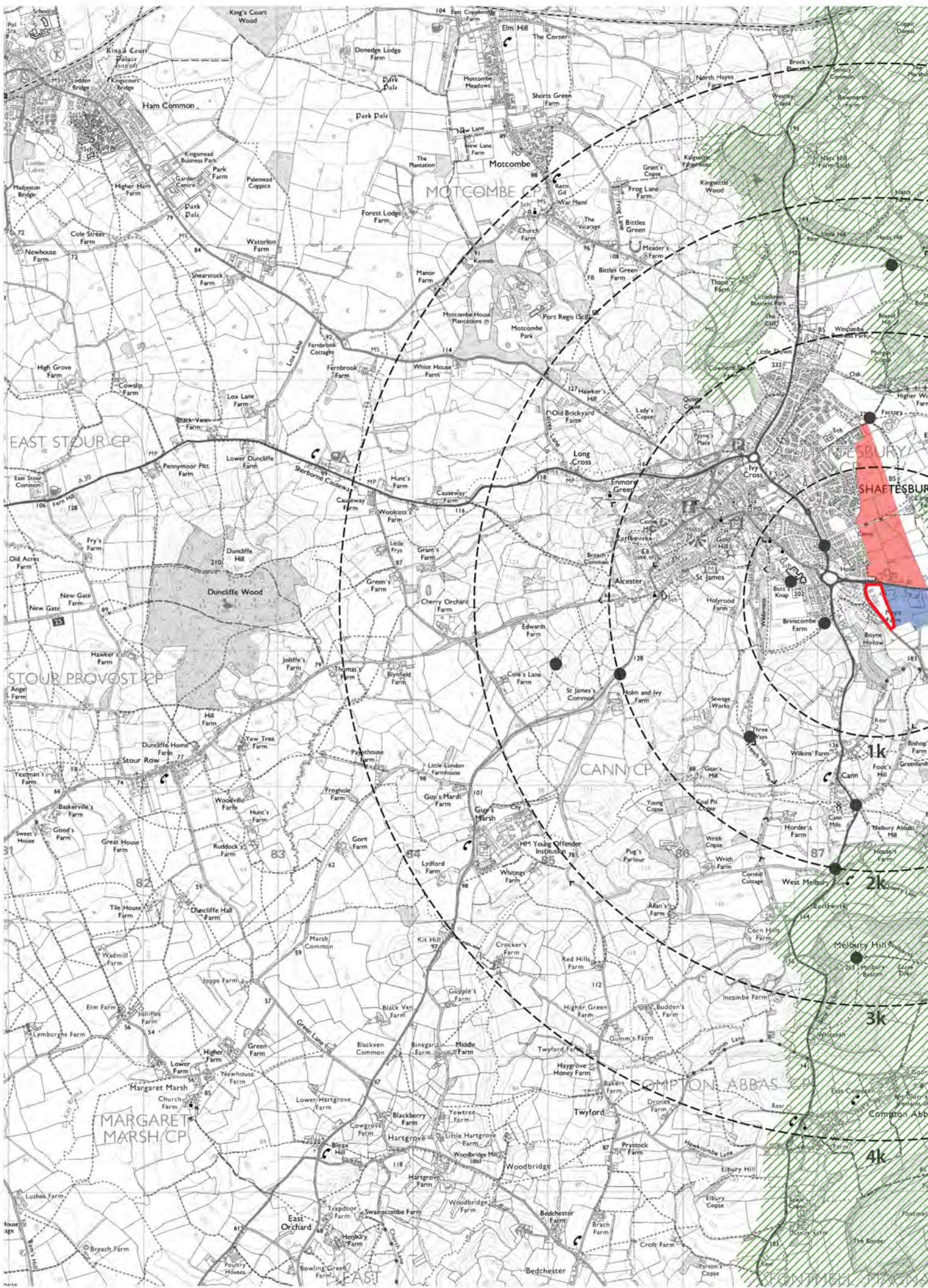
- Above 250m
- 225m to 250m
- 200m to 225m
- 175m to 200m
- 150m to 175m
- 125m to 150m
- 100m to 125m
- 75m to 100m
- 50m to 75m
- 25m to 50m
- Below 25m

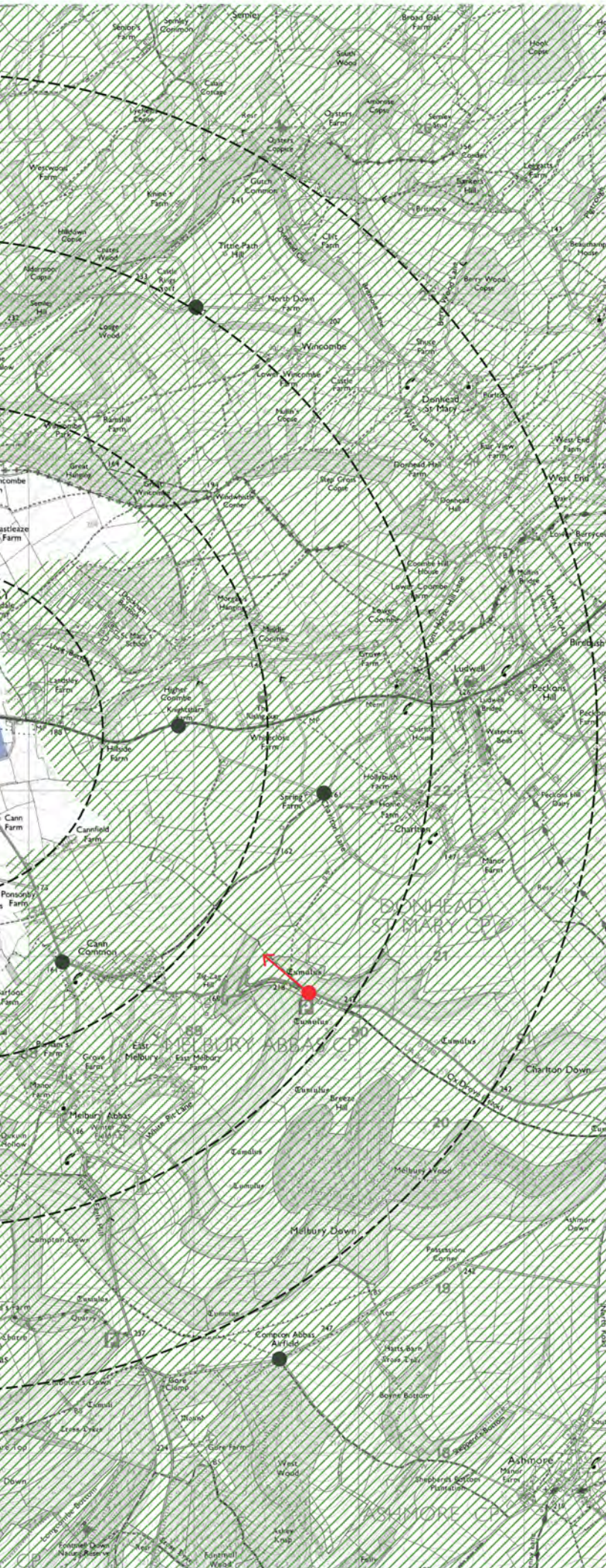
REV	NOTES	DATE
	Higher Blandford Road, Shaftesbury Appendix 2 - Landform	- DCC
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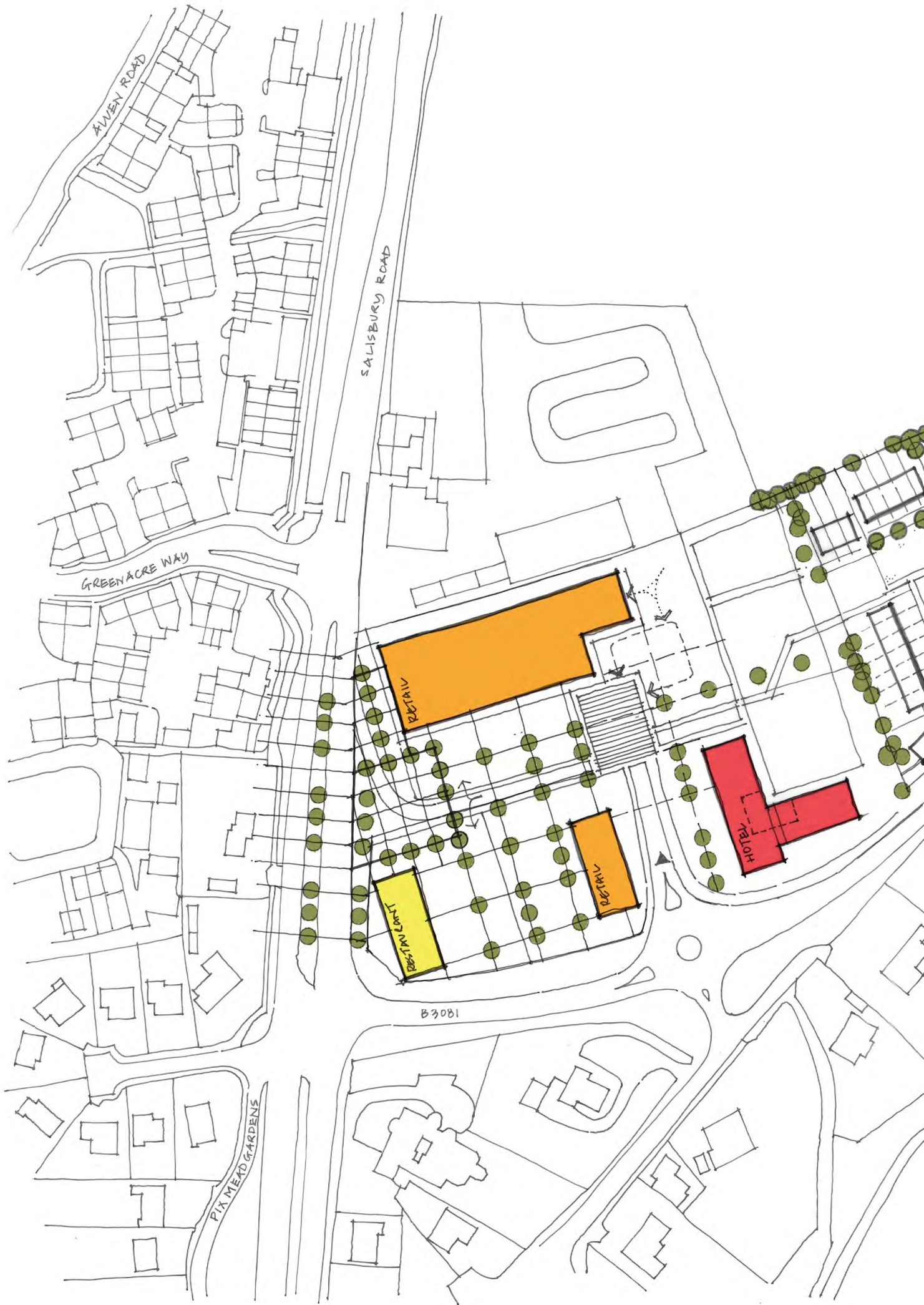
- Site boundary
- Mixed use predominantly housing Policies SB 8 - 11
(North Dorset District - Wide Local Plan 1st Revision)
- Employment proposal area Policy SB 12
(North Dorset District - Wide Local Plan 1st Revision)
- Dorset and Cranbourne Chase AONB
(www.magic.gov.uk - June 2014)
- Potential viewpoints assessed
- Viewpoint illustrated

REV	NOTES	DATE
	Higher Blandford Road, Shaftesbury Appendix 3 - Potential Viewpoints	- DCC
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DRAWING STATUS



ALLEN ROAD

SALISBURY ROAD

GREENACRE WAY

RESTAURANT

RESTAURANT

RESTAURANT



HOTEL




B3081

PIA MENDO GARDENS



ACCOMMODATION SCHEDULE

-  DETAIL : 1755 SQM (65M x 27M)
CIRCA 80 PARKING SPACES -
100+ POSSIBLE.
-  HOTEL : 1600 SQM (60 BED)
CIRCA 85 PARKING SPACES

-  RESTAURANT : 415 SQM CIRCA 55 SPACES
(SINGLE STOREY)
-  DETAIL : 415 SQM CIRCA 55 SPACES
(SINGLE STOREY)
-  RESIDENTIAL : 50 - 55 DWELLINGS

HIGHER BLANDFORD ROAD, SHAFTESBURY B
 SKETCH MASTERPLAN DC/NE
 14046 L. 02.01 1.1000@AZ MAY 2014

CliftonEmerydesign

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