

Green Pits Lane, Nunney
Landscape & Visual Appraisal

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This landscape and visual appraisal has been carried out by Golby + Luck Landscape Architects following instruction by Barratt Homes Bristol to evaluate the land to the east of Green Pits Lane, Nunney in landscape and visual terms (the site), and assess its suitability for the purposes of residential development.

1.2 The following appraisal has been carried out taking into consideration the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment - Third Edition (2013), published by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (GLVIA). An assessment methodology is set out in Appendix 1, and a summary of likely landscape and visual effects in Appendix 2.

1.3 This appraisal is supported by a series of drawings that identify:

- Site location and context;
- Landscape planning context;
- Landscape character; and
- Topographical relationship

1.4 This appraisal also includes a series of representative views that have been taken from publically accessible locations including the public highway, public rights of way, and public access land. Site work was carried out during November 2013 and January 2014 allowing for a worst-case winter scenario to be assessed with limited leaf cover. For each view a number of factors are considered that include:

- The accessibility to the public;
- The likely number and sensitivity of viewers that may be affected;
- The viewing direction, distance and elevation;
- The nature of the viewing experience;
- The type of view (panorama, open or filtered)
- The degree to which the proposals would either be in keeping or contrast with the established visual setting.

1.5 In the production of this appraisal reference has been made to the following documents and information:



- National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF);
- The Mendip District Local Plan 2002 (MLP);
- Countryside Agency Character of England – Character Area 133 Blackmoor Vale and Vale of Wardour, and Area 141 Mendip Hill;
- Landscape Assessment of Mendip District – May 1997 (MDLA);
- Ordnance Survey information Explorer 1:20,000 and Street Plus 1:10,000; and
- Google Earth aerial photography.



2 SITE CONTEXT AND DESCRIPTION

Site Context

- 2.1 The site is located at the southern edge of Nunney set between the existing settlement edge to the north, Green Pits Lane to the west, the A361 and associated houses built-development and infrastructure to the south, and Catch Road with associated houses and built-development to the east, see GL0159 01.
- 2.2 Nunney is a large village located approximately 3km to the south-west of Frome. Other settlements in the local context include Chantry and Whatley to the north; Holwell, Cloford and Leighton to the west; and Trudoxhill to the south.
- 2.3 Nunney is a linear settlement that has grown from a historic core to the north of the settlement, focussed around Nunney Castle, extending south along the High Street, Green Pits Lane and Catch Road towards the A361. The southern half of the settlement distinctly contrasts with the north half that comprises modern residential development. This is reflected in the designation of the Conservation Area and associated Listed Buildings, concentrated around the Church Street and the Castle that is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, see GL0159 02.
- 2.4 To the south-west Primrose Hill extends along Holwell Valley towards Holwell and associated quarry sites that straddle the A361 at Holwell Hill.
- 2.5 In terms of infrastructure, the principal highway network comprises the A361 that connects Nunney with Frome to the north-east and Shepton Mallet approximately 10.5km to the west. The A359 extends south from Nunney connecting to Yeovil over 30km to the south-west. Beyond the 'A' roads the local highways comprise a number of rural lanes that connect Nunney with the surrounding villages.
- 2.6 In terms of landform, the historic core of the settlement is located in the valley setting of Nunney Brook with the castle and associated moat situated adjacent to the watercourse at approximately 105m AOD, see GL0159 03. To the south the settlement rises on the southern valley slopes towards a local ridgeline just to the south of the A361 at approximately 152m AOD. This ridge extends to the south to a local high point at Postlebury Wood at approximately 197m AOD. To the east the A361 follows the ridge to the north of Marston Park. To the north and west of Nunney Brook the landform rises



towards a broad limestone ridge defined by a number of mineral extraction sites that include Whatley Quarry and Torr Quarry.

- 2.7 In terms of access, the local landscape setting to the village is well serviced by a network of public footpaths that cross the surrounding farmland. To the north-west there are a number of bridleways associated with the farms and quarry access tracks. To the south-east a byway (Westend Lane) bypasses the village of Trudoxhill, see GL0159 01 and 02.
- 2.8 In terms of landscape planning designations, the site and local context are not covered by any specific designation that would suggest any increased landscape sensitivity. Asham Wood comprises a prominent elevated woodland block and is designated as a Special Landscape Feature approximately 2km to the west of Nunney, see GL0159 01. The wood is also designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) covered by Policy EN11 of the Local Plan. There are a number of SSSI's in the wider landscape setting the closest of which is at Colemans Quarry just under 1km to the west of the site, separated by the A361 and intervening farmland.

Site Description

- 2.9 The site extends to approximately 3.52 hectares of land comprising a large field to the north maintained as arable farmland, and a smaller paddock to the south-east corner of the site maintained as rough grassland, see GL0159 02.
- 2.10 Beyond the fence line and intermittent sections of scrub that subdivides the fields within the site and the overhead cables that cross the northern field between Green Pits Lane and Catch Road, there are no internal features within the site that would prohibit its development.
- 2.11 The northern boundary of the site is defined by a post and wire fence, intermittent scrub and tree cover, and the boundary fencing to the recent housing development at Pookfield Close. Beyond this boundary is the modern residential setting associated with Glebelands.
- 2.12 The western boundary of the site is defined by a low cut hedgerow that appears fragmented in sections with Bramble throughout. Beyond this boundary Green Pits Lane comprises a sunken lane that is narrow and set between field boundary hedgerows. Beyond Green Pits Lane to the west are wider areas of farmland maintained as pasture.



- 2.13 To the south the site is defined by taller sections of hedgerow cover and tree cover, beyond which is Green Pits Lane, a lorry park with associated filling station and café, a petrol filling station and restaurant, a pair of semi-detached properties called Hawthorne Villas, a local garage, Nunney Catch Farm and cottages, and the Theobald Public House that appears to be a vacant premises. The lorry park, petrol filling station and associated restaurant comprise a small service area associated with the Nunney Catch roundabout on the A361.
- 2.14 To the east the site is again bound by a native hedgerow with associated tree cover, beyond which is a private dwelling called The Bungalow, and built development associated with small business units that are access off Catch Road to the east.
- 2.15 In terms of landform, the site falls from the southern boundary with the lorry park and Green Pits Lane at a high point of approximately 42m AOD to the northern boundary at Glebelands at a low point of approximately 35m AOD.
- 2.16 In terms of access, the site is maintained as private farmland and does not provide any public access or recreation space.
- 2.17 In terms of landscape designation the site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory designation that would prohibit its development. The ecological assessment accompanying this application has identified the land use within the site as being of limited ecological value, with the main interest being the boundary hedgerows to the south, east and west. Of these the entire hedgerow to the eastern boundary and approximately 55m of the northern extent of the western boundary are assessed as 'important' under the Hedgerow Regulations. There are no Listed Buildings on or adjoining the site (the closest being the Grade II listed Theobald Arms approximately 65m to the south-east of the site), see GL0159 02. The Nunney Conservation Area is approximately 450m to the north of the site, separated by areas of intervening modern residential development.
- 2.18 In summary, the site comprises a large arable field and small paddock with limited internal features of note, adjoining the existing settlement edge of Nunney that is defined by modern residential development. The site falls from south to north, contained within a framework of built-development, highways, and landscaping. The site is set within the



local ridgeline that rises to the south and is defined by a combination of development, elevated sections of highway and mature tree cover.



3 LANDSCAPE PLANNING CONTEXT

3.1 The site is located within the jurisdiction of Mendip District Council, with the relevant local landscape planning policies set out in the Mendip District Local Plan (adopted in 2002). The site is located beyond the defined limits to development, see GL0159 02. However, there are no specific policy designations that cover the site. The following paragraphs set out the relevant National and local landscape planning policy framework.

National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF)

3.2 The Department for Communities and Local Government issued the National Planning Policy Framework in March 2012. The Framework states at paragraph 14:

'At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.

For plan-making this means that:

- *Local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs for their area;*
- *Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless:*
 - *Any adverse impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
 - *Specific policies in this framework indicate development should be restricted*

For decision-taking this means:

- *Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and*
- *Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
 - *Any adverse impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*



- *Specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.'*

3.3 The 12 core planning principles are set out at Paragraph 17, those relevant to landscape issues include:

- *'Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of the land and buildings;*
- *Take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it;*
- *Contribute to the conserving and enhancing of the natural environment and reducing pollution. Allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework;*
- *Promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas, recognising that some open land can perform many functions (such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage, or food production);*
- *Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.'*

3.4 At Section 7 'Requiring good design' the Framework states in paragraph 58 that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- *'Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- *Establish a strong sense of place, using streetscape and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;*



- *Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public spaces as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;*
- *Respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local and surrounding materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;*
- *Create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and*
- *Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.'*

3.5 At Section 8 'Promoting healthy communities' the Framework states in paragraph 69 that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve places that promote:

- *'Opportunities for meeting between members of the community who might not otherwise come into contact with each other, including through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres and active street frontages which bring together those who work, live and play in the vicinity;*
- *Safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion; and*
- *Safe and accessible developments, containing clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public spaces, which encourage the active and continued use of public areas.'*

3.6 In relation to Public Rights of Way paragraph 75 states

'planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. Local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.'



3.7 At Section 11 *'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment'* the Framework in paragraph 109 states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- *'Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;*
- *Recognise the wider benefits of ecosystem services;*
- *Minimise impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline of biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*
- *Preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability; and*
- *Remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.'*

3.8 The Framework states at paragraph 110 that:

'In preparing plans to meet development needs, the aim should be to minimise pollution and other adverse effects on the local and natural environment. Plans should allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in the Framework.'

3.9 Paragraph 115 specifically references landscape categories for which great weight should be attached to their protection, the NPPF states:

'Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all



these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.'

- 3.10 Paragraph 117 also addresses minimising impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity, and in relation to landscape issues states that planning policy should:

'plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries.'

- 3.11 Paragraph 118 addresses the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and states that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying a number of principles, one of which states:

'planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss.'

- 3.12 At Section 12 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' the Framework in paragraph 126 states that local planning authorities should take into account:

- *'The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- *The wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;*
- *The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and*
- *'Opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.'*

Mendip District Local Plan (adopted 2002)

- 3.13 Nunney is identified under Policy S1 of the Local Plan as a 'Village'. This policy states that in such locations:



“development commensurate with their size and accessibility, and appropriate to their character and physical identity, and which will sustain and enhance their role, will be permitted. Priority will be given to re-using previously developed land.

- 3.14 The site is located beyond the development limits identified on the proposals map. Policy S1 states:

“Outside the development limits identified on the Proposals Map, development will be strictly controlled and will only be permitted where it benefits economic activity, and maintains or enhances the environment, and does not foster growth in the need to travel.”

- 3.15 Chapter 4 of the Local Plan is relevant to the quality of proposed development. This chapter sets out a number of policies relevant to all developments. Policy Q1 is concerned with design quality and protection of amenity. The policy states:

“Policy Q1 - Design Quality and Protection of Amenity

Development will be permitted where its design relates satisfactorily to its surroundings in terms of:

- 1) the impact of the scheme on urban design;*
- 2) the impact of the scheme on the landscape;*
- 3) the function of the open spaces around the development;*
- 4) the amenity of neighbouring buildings and land-uses; and*
- 5) amenity provided to occupiers of the development.”*

- 3.16 The impact of the development proposal on the character and appearance of the landscape and associated landscape resource is central to this assessment.

- 3.17 Policy Q2 is concerned with the protection of open space land and open areas of visual significance. Open areas of visual significance have been identified on the proposals



map, see GL0159 02. Other criteria considered under this policy includes open land that provides important views into or out of a settlement; views of significant local features or buildings; land that contributes to the setting of the settlement and/or enhances its setting; and land that creates a sense of place or contributes to the local character. The site is not identified on the proposals map as being an open area of visual significance important to the setting of the village, see GL0159 02. Inter-visibility between the site and locally important features such as Listed Buildings, the Conservation Area, Nunney Castle is restricted by the sites immediate relationship with the modern residential setting of the settlement and existing framework of built development, landform and vegetation cover.

- 3.18 Policy Q4 requires development to be appropriately landscaped securing satisfactory integration with its surroundings. Landscaping measures should respect local distinctiveness and reflect local species, whilst safeguarding local ecology and retaining features of the site.
- 3.19 Chapter 7 of the Local Plan is concerned with the protection and enhancement of local assets. Policies EN1 and EN2 relate to designated sites and are therefore no relevant to this assessment. Policy EN3 is specific to protected species which has been considered through a detailed ecological assessment submitted as part of this planning application.
- 3.20 Policy EN4 is concerned with nature conservation outside designated sites. The policy requires acceptable development to; not result in any net loss to biodiversity; make provision for the mitigation of any damaged or lost habitat with equivalent value and characteristics; secure long-term management measures; and not severe any existing habitat networks.
- 3.21 Policy EN5 is concerned with the protection of trees, hedgerows and woodlands. The policy is specifically concerned with the loss of features that contribute to the settlement character and are important to biodiversity.
- 3.22 Policies EN6 to EN9 are concerned with designated landscapes and are therefore not relevant to the site. Policy EN10 is concerned with the Green Belt and is again not relevant to the site. Policies EN11 to EN17 are concerned with protection of archaeology and the water resource. Policies EN17 to 25 are concerned with the protection of Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings. The site is not part of a Conservation Area, and nor is it within the setting of Nunney Conservation Area, and does not contain any Listed Buildings. Policy



EN26 is concerned with the protection of the setting of Listed Buildings. The Theobald Arms is located to the south-east of the site, separated by Catch Road, and intervening built-development and vegetation. It is unlikely that the development of the site will result in any significant harm to the setting of this Listed Building.

- 3.23 In summary, the site is located beyond the defined settlement limits. The site does not form part of one of the District's designated landscapes that include Landscape Value Areas, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Special Landscape Features, and Park and Gardens Listed for their Historic Interest. The site is not covered by any landscape designation that would prohibit its development. The site is not part of a designated Conservation Area and does not contain any Listed Buildings, and nor is its development likely to significantly affect any such designation.



4 BASELINE REVIEW

Land Use and Vegetation

- 4.1 The main body of the site is maintained as arable farmland with a small field to the south-east corner set out as a paddock maintained as rough grassland. The fields within the site are open with the only internal vegetation features comprising small clumps of remnant hedgerow along the line of the internal field boundary.
- 4.2 The main vegetation features of the site comprise the boundary hedgerows to the south, east and west that are low cut and fragmented hedgerows to the boundary with Green Pits Lane, and taller hedgerow cover with scattered trees to the remaining southern and eastern boundaries. None of these feature are covered by any statutory or non-statutory designation. The eastern boundary hedgerow and northern extent of the western boundary hedgerow have been assessed as being 'important' under the Hedgerow Regulations. They are all features that are common and widespread in the local landscape setting and are replaceable. The land use of the site is considered to be of low sensitivity to change, and the vegetation medium sensitivity to change.

Landform

- 4.3 The landform of the site falls at a relatively consistent gradient from the southern boundary with Green Pits Lane to the northern boundary with Glebelands. The landform and associated settlement continues to fall at a similar gradient to the north, becoming shallower towards the lower extent of the valley setting close to the castle. Although set on sloping land the site affords a framework of built development to its northern, eastern and southern boundaries, providing containment. More importantly the site sits below the elevated ridgeline to the south that is defined by an elevated section of highway with associated mature tree cover, and built-development. The landform associated with the site is considered to be of medium sensitivity to change.

Access

- 4.4 The site is maintained as private farmland and does not provide any public access.

Hydrology

- 4.5 The site does not contain any hydrological features such as ponds or watercourses.



Cultural Heritage

- 4.6 The site is not part of a Conservation Area and does not contain any Listed Buildings. Nunney Conservation Area that includes the castle (SAM) and several Listed Buildings, is located to the north, separated from the site by modern residential development. The Theobald Arms public houses is located to the south-east of the site separated by Catch Road and intervening built-development and vegetation. Cultural heritage assets are considered to be high-medium sensitivity to change.

Landscape Character

- 4.7 At a National level the Countryside Agency publication Countryside Character Volume 8: South West, identifies the site and Nunney in Area 141 – Mendip Hills, see GL0159 04. The key characteristics of this area are:

- *“A chain of prominent limestone hills extending inland from the coast and rising up sharply from surrounding lowlands.*
- *An open, largely treeless, limestone plateau with karst features, cave systems, dry stone walls and sparse settlement.*
- *Dramatic gorges, cliffs and escarpment slopes around the plateau.*
- *A sharp contrast between the open plateau and steep escarpment slopes of the karst landscape and the more complex, gentler landforms in the east.*
- *Many industrial archaeological sites reflecting the lead, coal and cloth industries.*
- *Perpendicular church towers.*
- *Country houses in the east with wooded parks.*
- *Buildings in local stone with pantile roofs: stones include grey limestone, reddish dolomitic limestone and grey or honey-coloured oolitic limestone.*
- *Outstanding prehistoric ritual landscapes.”*

- 4.8 This is an assessment of a broad landscape character area that identifies the prominent and defining features relevant to the Mendip Hills. Whilst some of these characteristics are



relevant to the wider landscape setting most are not representative of the site and its local context. The site and Nunney are located on the edge of the Mendip Hills landscape character area, at the transition with the Blackmoor Vale and Vale of Wardour landscape character area. The key characteristics of this area are:

- *“A complex mosaic of mixed farming: undulating, lush, clay vales fringed by Upper Greensand hills and scarps.*
- *Small, rectilinear pasture fields with hedgerow oak trees and many scattered small broadleaved woodlands.*
- *Many streams and waterside trees.*
- *Wooded Upper Greensand scarps and outliers with historic parks.*
- *Open arable Upper Greensand and dip slopes.*
- *Broken, low, limestone ridges with shallow valleys crossing the clayey Blackmoor Vale and steeper valleys around the margins of the area.*
- *Small villages and hamlets form nucleii within a patchwork of fields, hedges, woods and trees.*
- *Many villages at scarp foot, river crossing points and strategic sites.*
- *A wide variety of local building materials and techniques, including half timbering. Todber*
- *Freestone and Upper Greensand are widely used in the east.”*

4.9 At a local level the Landscape Assessment of Mendip District (May 1997) identifies the site and Nunney as being located in the East Mendip Hills landscape character area (LCA), and more specifically the South East Farmland landscape character type (LCT).

4.10 The key characteristics of the South East Farmlands are:

- *“Gently-undulating landform;*
- *Low hedges;*
- *Intensive farming;*
- *Arable and pasture;*



- *Woodland,*
- *Quarries;*
- *Quarry bunds;*
- *Few hedgerow trees;*
- *Irregular field patterns;*
- *Woodland of nature conservation interest."*

4.11 The gently undulating landform, low hedgerows and intensive farming land use comprising arable and pasture are all characteristics of the site and local setting. The quarrying activity and associated features is more notable to the west of the village as is the woodland cover. The text notes the defined ridge that the A361 runs along to the south of Nunney creating the boundary with the Frome Valley to the south-east.

4.12 Set within the South East Farmland LCT is the Nunney, Nunney Brook and Egford Brook LCT. It is important to note the relevance of this boundary that separates the settlement at a line broadly correlating with the extent of the Conservation Area, and therefore further reinforcing the distinction between the historic core to the north of the settlement and the modern extension to the south, see GL0159 04.

4.13 The key characteristics of the Nunney, Nunney Brook and Egford Brook LCT are:

- *"Narrow valleys;*
- *Dense woodland;*
- *Major historic village;*
- *Fortified manor house*
- *Small pasture fields;*
- *Overgrown hedgerows."*

4.14 It is clear that these characteristics are not representative of the site and its local setting. The key characteristics of the site and its local setting can be summarised as:

- *Mixture of medium sized fields managed as arable and pastoral farmland;*
- *Rolling landform with ridgeline associated with the A361 to the south of the site;*



- *Low cut hedgerows with gaps forming, with sections of taller hedgerows and increased tree cover to the south and east of the site;*
- *Immediate setting of modern residential development;*
- *Local highway comprising elevated section of the A361 with associated structural landscaping and narrow sunken local lanes bound by hedgerows;*
- *Large lorry park and petrol filling station associated with Nunney Catch; and*
- *Views across wider rolling landscape to the west of the settlement in contrast to the northern extent of the settlement that is contained within the lower valley setting and associated woodland cover.*

4.15 The landscape character of the site and its local setting is considered to be of medium sensitivity to change, increasing to high sensitivity in the context of the northern half of the settlement set within the localised valley setting of Nunney Brook.

Visual Setting

4.16 The following paragraphs consider the visual setting of the site referencing a series of representative views that are illustrated on GL0159 05 to 08, view locations are shown on GL0159 02.

4.17 View 1 is taken from the Glebelands at the northern boundary of the site. From this location there are open views across the site towards the southern boundary at Green Pits Road. The visual horizon beyond the site to the south is defined by the elevated section of the A361 and associated vegetation cover. To the left of the view is the café at the lorry park and Hawthorne Villas. To the right of the view is the Glebelands and the post and wire fence that defines the northern boundary of the site. Receptors local to this view include residents, car users, cyclists and pedestrians and are considered to be of high-medium sensitivity to change.

4.18 View 2 is again taken from the Glebelands at the northern boundary of the site. From this location there are open views across the site. To the right of the view the visual horizon is defined by the elevated section of the A361 and associated vegetation. To the centre of the view is the lorry park café and Hawthorne Villas. Towards the left of the view the roofscape of the buildings fronting Catch Road are visible beyond the vegetation at the eastern boundary of the site. Further to the left is the recent residential development at



Pookfield Close. Receptors local to this view include residents, car users, cyclists and pedestrians and are considered to be of high-medium sensitivity to change.

- 4.19 View 3 is taken from Green Pits Lane approximately 20m from the site looking south. From this location views into the site are restricted by the boundary vegetation in combination with the slightly reduced level of the lane relative to the ground level within the site. To the left of the view is the existing modern residential development fronting Glebelands. Receptors local to this view include car users, pedestrians and cyclists considered to be of medium sensitivity to change.
- 4.20 View 4 is taken from Green Pits Lane at the south-west corner of the site looking across the site towards the existing modern residential setting associated with Glebelands. This view shows the low cut and fragmented nature of the hedgerow to the western boundary of the site. This view also shows how the hedgerow changes to the southern boundary of the site with a taller habit and increased tree cover. This view also demonstrates the limited visual relationship between the site and the wider settlement to the north, even in views from the more elevated southern boundary of the site. Receptors local to this view include car users, pedestrians and cyclists considered to be of medium sensitivity to change.
- 4.21 View 5 is taken from Green Pits Lane at the lorry park approximately 60m from the southern boundary of the site. From this location there are views across the lorry park towards the vegetation that defines the southern boundary of the site but not into the site. Limited views exist towards the wider landscape setting but are generally subservient to the lorry park that dominates the foreground. Receptors local to this view include car users, pedestrians and cyclists considered to be of medium-low sensitivity to change.
- 4.22 View 6 is taken from Green Pits Lane approximately 20m from the site looking north. To the left of the view is Hawthorne Villas with the roadside hedgerow extending across the foreground of the view. There is a small landholding sunk below the road set behind this hedgerow, beyond which is the hedgerow and tree cover associated with the southern boundary of the site, seen rising above the roadside hedgerow and filtering views into and across the site. Views towards the distant ridgeline to the west of Nunney are silhouetted behind the intervening vegetation. Receptors local to this view include car users, pedestrians and cyclists considered to be of medium sensitivity to change.



- 4.23 View 7 is taken from Pookfield Close approximately 20m from the site looking south. This view shows the recent residential development at the north-east boundary of the site. Between the properties there are filtered views into the site and to the vegetated ridgeline beyond. Receptors local to this view include residents, car users, pedestrians and cyclists considered to be of medium sensitivity to change.
- 4.24 View 8 is taken from the PRow crossing the farmland to the west of Green Pits Lane approximately 255m from the site looking south-east. From this location there are open views to the existing modern residential edge fronting Green Pits Lane. The white gable end of the first property fronting Glebelands is seen to the south with the site extending towards the vegetated ridgeline further to the south. Due to the change in elevation views into the site are screened by the intervening landform. This in turn limits any contribution that the land within the site make to the wider farmland setting from this location. Receptors local to this view include walkers and are considered to be of medium sensitivity to the proposed change.
- 4.25 View 9 is taken from the same PRow as View 8 from a more elevated location further to the south. This view is approximately 325m from the site looking east. From this location there are open views into and across the site, set in the context of the wider settlement, defined by modern residential development and extending across the field of view to the north. To the north there is a glimpsed view of the castle nestled in the wooded valley setting. The site extends to the south of the settlement but is seen in a framework of built-development, landform and vegetation to the south and east. Receptors local to this view include walkers and are considered to be of medium sensitivity to the proposed change.
- 4.26 View 10 is taken from a PRow rising out of Holwell Valley to the west of Green Pits Lane approximately 445m from the site looking south. In this view the pasture fields in the foreground rise towards the horizon defined by the modern residential setting associated with Green Pits Lane. From this location views into the site are screened by intervening landform and boundary vegetation. The vegetated skyline associated with the elevated section of the A361 is seen beyond the site. Receptors local to this view include walkers and are considered to be of medium sensitivity to the proposed change.
- 4.27 View 11 is taken from the PRow that extends between Horn Street and Colemans Quarry approximately 975m to the north-west of the site. In this view the foreground of open



farmland contrasts with the wooded setting of Nunney Valley set on the lower ground in the middle distance. Views exist towards the tower of All Saints church, and glimpsed views of Nunney Castle. The modern southern half of the settlement can be seen rising along Green Pits Lane with the predominant use of white render contrasting with the green setting of the surrounding farmland. To the south there are glimpsed views into the site with the vegetated ridgeline beyond. Receptors local to this view include walkers and are considered to be of high sensitivity to the proposed change.

- 4.28 View 12 is taken from the PRow to the north of Tower Views Farm approximately 455m from the site looking west. This view shows the more wooded appearance of the farmland to the east of the settlement that combines with the landform to screen and heavily filter views towards the settlement even during winter months. From this location views appear to be restricted toward the site although white render of the existing houses in the settlement are just discernable, as is the vegetation that defines the ridgeline to the south associated with the A361. Receptors local to this view include walkers and are considered to be of high sensitivity to the proposed change.
- 4.29 In summary, the site affords a framework of settlement, built-development, landform and vegetation that limits the visual envelope of the site to the settlement edge at the northern boundary; the ridgeline associated with the A361 to the southern boundary of the site; and the built-development and associated boundary vegetation to the east of the site. To the west views of the site are restricted to short sections of the PRow network from which the site is viewed in the immediate context of the established modern residential setting associated with the southern half of the village.



5 LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

- 5.1 The Local Authority has designated a number of landscapes and features within the District including Landscape Value Areas, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and Special Landscape Features. The site and local landscape setting are not covered by any of these designations.
- 5.2 The baseline assessment has also confirmed that the site is not covered by any specific landscape designation and there are no statutory or non-statutory designations that would prohibit the development of the site for residential purposes. The site does not provide any form of public access being maintained as privately owned farmland.
- 5.3 The ecological appraisal has confirmed that the land use within the site is of limited ecological value. The main ecological interest associated with the site is concentrated to the boundary hedgerows. The features associated with the site are common, widespread in the local landscape setting and are replaceable.
- 5.4 The site is not part of a Conservation Area and does not contain any Listed Buildings. The baseline assessment has identified the contrast between the historic core to the north of the settlement with features such as Nunney Castle (SAM) and the Church of All Saints (Grade I Listed Building) and associated Conservation Area designation. This is in contrast to the southern half of the settlement defined by modern residential development.
- 5.5 This contrast is also acknowledged in the local landscape character assessment identifying the more sensitive northern half of the settlement within the Nunney, Nunney Brook and Egford Brook landscape character type, and the northern half of the settlement in the South East Farmland landscape character type.
- 5.6 The site presents a logical extension to the settlement building upon the modern residential expansion of the village set within a robust and enduring framework of settlement, highways, built-development and landscaping. Although the development of the site will extend the settlement towards the local ridgeline associated with the A361, the ridge is elevated from the site and defined by built-development and vegetation that will contain development with the site avoiding the creation of a conspicuous residential skyline.
- 5.7 This framework also helps to limit the visual envelope of the site to the settlement edge at the northern boundary; the ridgeline associated with the A361 to the southern boundary



of the site; and the built-development and associated boundary vegetation to the east of the site. To the west views of the site are restricted to short sections of the PRow network from which the site is viewed in the immediate context of the established modern residential setting associated with the southern half of the village.

5.8 The baseline assessment has identified a number of constraints and opportunities that can be used to inform a landscape strategy to guide a masterplan for residential development. Landscape constraints of the site can be summarised as:

- The boundary hedgerows and tree cover associated with the site (As section of hedgerow to the western part of the southern site boundary will be removed and reinstated within the site to accommodate the site access and associated forward visibility splays);
- The landform within the site that slopes gently from Green Pits Lane at the southern boundary to Glebelands at the northern boundary;
- The interface with the existing settlement edge; and
- The setting of the southern ridgeline and need to secure a scale and form of development sensitive to it.

5.9 Whilst a number of development constraints have been identified these can be used to inform a masterplan for residential development for the site and can create opportunities to further limit any likely adverse effects on the landscape resource. Landscape opportunities can be summarised as:

- To secure development on land not specifically designated as one of the District's sensitive or protected landscape;
- To secure development on land unrestricted by statutory or non-statutory designations; with no internal features of note to prohibit development; and assessed as being of limited ecological value;
- To extend the existing settlement in a manner consistent with the direction of modern residential growth in the village, on land that is contained by both robust and enduring boundaries defined by settlement, built-development, landform and vegetation;



- To secure a development that safeguards the setting of the historic core of the village limiting any harm on the designated Conservation Area and Nunney Castle;
- To secure a development that has the potential to create a new area of public open space with associated play facilities to meet existing shortfalls in the village, and extend the local resource of public access land;
- To use new areas of open space to soften the character and appearance of the proposed development and secure an appropriate transition between the development and existing settlement edge; and
- To secure the long-term management of the sites landscape features and associated wildlife habitat.

5.10 The identification of landscape constraints and opportunities sets out a clear landscape strategy for the site that can be used to inform a masterplan for residential development. An illustrative masterplan for development produced by Turley Associates has been included in Appendix 3 of this appraisal. The key elements of the proposal are:

- A residential development of up to 100 dwellings;
- Provision of public open space with associated sustainable drainage measures creating an attractive community space at the transition between the existing settlement and proposed development, see GL0159 09 in Appendix 4;
- Development set out at a low density and associated highway layout responding to the levels changes within the site;
- Development set back from the southern boundary into the site allowing built-development to be retained within the framework of the ridgeline and associated buildings and vegetation;
- Development retains the boundary hedgerow and tree cover to the western and eastern boundaries of the site. A section of the southern boundary to its western extent will be removed and reinstated within the site to accommodate the site access and forward visibility splays. Any such loss will be more than mitigated through new native hedgerow planting measures to the northern boundary of the site, and reinforcement and management of the retained hedgerows; and



6 LIKELY LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

- 6.1 In terms of land use and vegetation, the baseline assessment has confirmed that the site is currently maintained as arable farmland with a small area of rough grassland to the south-east corner. The site is not part of any statutory or non-statutory designation and does not have any internal features that would prohibit its use for residential development beyond the boundary vegetation. The transformation of the fields within the site to residential development will clearly materially alter the site. However, the loss of the fields within the site is likely to result in a low magnitude of change when considered against the wider farmland resource leading to an adverse effect of minor significance.
- 6.2 The proposals will result in the loss of a section of hedgerow to the southern boundary and south-west corner of the site to accommodate the site access and forward visibility splays. This hedgerow is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory designation. In terms of its amenity value the arboricultural assessment identifies this hedgerow as Category C (low retention value) when considered against the assessment criteria in BS5837 2012. As a feature it is both common to and widespread throughout the local landscape setting and is replaceable. This loss is likely to result in a medium magnitude of change to the vegetation resource leading to an adverse effect of moderate significance in the short-term. The proposals will include for the replacement of this hedgerow forming the new boundary to the highway. The replacement hedgerow will be planted using native species common to the area and retained under the control of the adopting Authority or management company. In addition to this new lengths of hedgerow will be planted to the Glebelands frontage extending to approximately 130m, alongside the planting of native trees within the proposed public open space, and more domestic species within the body of the development. Native planting is also proposed to the boundary with properties at Pookfield Close extending to approximately 100m. The replacement of the lost section of hedgerow to the southern boundary in addition to new planting measures will secure a net gain in vegetation features across the site, leading to a beneficial effect moderate significance in the long-term.
- 6.3 In terms of landform, the baseline assessment has identified the sloping nature of the landform within the site gently falling from Green Pits Lane at the southern boundary to Glebelands at the northern boundary. The development proposals is masterplanned at a low density set around a highway design that responds to the gradient of the site to limit the need for any significant engineering solutions. The proposed development will also appear consistent with the existing settlement that is present on similarly sloping land to



the north, and the built-development present on the elevated ridgeline to the south of the site. The development will result in a medium-low magnitude of change to the landform leading to an adverse effect of moderate-minor significance.

- 6.4 The baseline assessment has confirmed that the site is maintained as private farmland and does not provide any public access. The proposals allows for the creation of a new area of public open space set between the proposed built-development and existing dwellings fronting the site. The open space will include new play facilities and informal recreation space for community use, seeking to meet the identified shortfall of provision that exists in Nunney. The development of the site is therefore likely to result in a beneficial effect of moderate significance to access.
- 6.5 In terms of hydrology, the baseline assessment identified that the site does not contain any hydrological features. The proposal includes two new balancing ponds that will be set out as open grass swales sown with flower and herb species suited to the seasonally wetland habitat that will be created. The ponds will extend the terrestrial grassland habitat associated with the site. The development of the site is therefore likely to result in a beneficial effect of minor significance to hydrological features.
- 6.6 In terms of cultural heritage assets that include the designated Conservation Area, and associated Nunney Castle (SAM), and Listed Buildings, the development of the site will not result in any material harm. The nearest Listed Building is the Theobald Arms Public House and the likely visual effect of development on this asset is considered in the assessment of View 6.
- 6.7 The baseline assessment identified the site as being located in the East Mendip Hills landscape character area, more specifically the South East Farmland landscape character type. The baseline assessment has identified the immediate relationship that the site shares with settlement and the distinction that is drawn between the more sensitive historic core of the village located in the Nunney, Nunney Brook and Egford Brook landscape character type. The site is set within a framework of built-development, landform and vegetation that limits its relationship with the wider farmland setting whilst reinforcing its relationship with the settlement. This framework is further strengthened by the service area at the Nunney Catch roundabout on the A361 with petrol filling stations, a lorry park, garage and restaurant. In relation to the site and its local context the proposal is likely to result in a medium magnitude of change leading to an adverse effect of



moderate significance. When considered against the wider context of the South East Farmland and Nunney, Nunney Brook and Egford Brook landscape character types the proposed development is likely to result in a low-negligible magnitude of change leading to an adverse effect of minor significance.

- 6.8 In terms of the visual resource the baseline assessment confirmed that the visual setting of the site is heavily influenced by its relationship with the adjoining settlement, highways and landform.
- 6.9 Views 1 and 2 are both taken from Glebeland affording open views across the site, with wider views to the surrounding landscape setting restricted by the intervening ridgeline to the south of the site. The setting of both of these views is likely to be materially changed through the development of the site from an open field to residential development. The provision of public open space to the boundary of the site will secure a generous offset to development but in the short-term the magnitude of change is likely to be high leading to an adverse effect of major significance to residents and major-moderate significance to pedestrians, cyclists and car users. Over time the structural landscaping associated with the open space fronting Glebelands will mature to soften and filter any views of the development limiting any adverse effect on residents to major-moderate significance, and pedestrians, cyclists and car users to moderate significance.
- 6.10 Whilst the likely visual effect to residents fronting the site remains of major-moderate significance this has to be considered in the context that this effect is limited to approximately eight dwellings and the, development provides separation between dwellings well in excess of recognised residential amenity standards, and this likely effect would be common to any residential extension to an existing settlement.
- 6.11 View 3 is taken from Green Pits Lane to the north of the site set down on lower lying land and the slightly sunken setting of the highway. From this location there is likely to be views of the built development within the site, albeit set back from the northern boundary of the site, and set in the context of the modern residential setting to the east. The proposals are likely to result in a medium magnitude of change on receptors local to this view leading to an adverse effect of moderate-minor significance in the short-term. In the long-term the structural landscaping to the public open space will have matured further filtering views of the proposed housing limiting any adverse effect to minor significance.



- 6.12 View 4 is taken from the south-west corner of the site looking north across the site towards the existing modern residential setting of the settlement at Glebelands. The development of the site is likely to material change the setting of this view with the boundary of the site being redefined by housing and the hedgerow removed and reinstated within the site to accommodate the proposed access. The proposals are likely to result in a high magnitude of change on receptors local to this view leading to an adverse effect of major significance in the short-term. In the long-term the new boundary hedgerow and associated tree planting will have matured softening the boundary to the site and creating a hedged boundary consistent with the wider highway corridor, limiting any adverse effect to moderate significance.
- 6.13 View 5 is taken from Green Pits Lane opposite the lorry park at the Nunney Catch roundabout on the A361. In this view there are likely to be filtered views of the upper extent of the proposed built-development within the site, set in the context of the lorry park and associated structures and buildings. The proposals are likely to result in a low magnitude of change on receptors local to this view leading to an adverse effect of minor significance in the short-term. In the long-term tree planting to southern boundary of the site will have matured further filtering views of the proposed housing limiting any adverse effect to minimal significance.
- 6.14 View 6 is taken from Green Pits Lane at the south-east boundary of the site. From this location there are likely to be filtered views of the upper extent of the proposed built-development within the site set in the context of the highway and associated development. The proposals are likely to result in a low magnitude of change on receptors local to this view leading to an adverse effect of minor significance in the short-term. In the long-term tree planting to southern boundary of the site will have matured further filtering views of the proposed housing limiting any adverse effect to minimal significance.
- 6.15 View 7 is taken from Pookfield Close. From this location there are filtered views towards the site restricted by intervening built-development. The new housing is inward facing, fronting the highway with likely views towards the site only from secondary first floor windows at the rear elevation of the properties. From this location there will be views of the built development within the site that will be likely result in a high magnitude of change to residents, but more limited medium magnitude of change to pedestrian and cyclists. This in turn will lead to an adverse effect of major-moderate significance in the short-term. The proposals allow for a new planting measures to the boundary of the site that will



include native tree and shrub planting to provide a landscape buffer that will soften and filter views of the development, leading to a likely adverse effect of moderate significance in the long-term.

- 6.16 Views 8, 9 and 10 are taken from the local PRow network to the west of the site. The distance of the views from the site and their respective elevation varies and therefore the magnitude of any likely effect will also vary. The pathways are set in the open countryside, however the visual context of the site from these locations is defined by the established modern residential setting that comprises a key visual competent in each of these views, hence their sensitivity to the proposed change is considered to the medium. In View 8, closest of the views, the site takes up a wider section of the panorama on elevated land and there are likely to be views of development set in the context of the vegetated back drop. From this location the likely magnitude of change will be medium, leading to an adverse effect of moderate significance in the short-term. From the more elevated location of View 9 the site is set within context of the settlement that reaches out across the wider panorama. From View 10 the existing settlement has a more dominant setting on the skyline with views of the site and proposed development becoming more distant and screened by intervening landform. From Views 9 and 10 the likely magnitude of change will be low, leading to an adverse effect of minor significance in the short-term. In the long-term the structural planting associated with the open space to the north-west corner of the site, and planting measures to the western boundary, will mature to soften and filter views of development limiting any likely adverse effect to minor-minimal significance.
- 6.17 View 11 is taken over distance from an elevated section of PRow to the west of the settlement. This view takes in a wide panorama of the entire settlement, of which the site forms a small part and is viewed in the immediate context of the settlement and along the same horizontal plane. From this location there are likely to be distant views of the development seen in the context of the wider setting of established modern residential development resulting in a likely negligible magnitude of change that will lead to an adverse effect of minor significance. In the long-term the planting measures associated with the western boundary of the site will have matured filtering views of the development and limiting any adverse effects to minimal significance.
- 6.18 From View 12 the intervening landform and layering of boundary vegetation heavily filters and screens views towards the site. Any change through development to the visual



amenity of this PRow would barely be discernable even during winter months with limited leaf cover.



7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 In summary this appraisal has set out a clear and transparent assessment of the baseline resource applicable to the site, and an assessment of the likely landscape and visual effects of the development proposals. This assessment has identified that the site affords a framework of settlement, landform and vegetation that will limit any likely adverse landscape and visual effects on the character and appearance of the settlement and surrounding landscape.
- 7.2 The site is not part of one of the District's designated landscapes that includes Landscape Value Areas, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and Special Landscape Features. The site and local landscape setting are not covered by any of these designations.
- 7.3 The baseline assessment has also confirmed that the site is not covered by any specific landscape designation and there are no statutory or non-statutory designations that would prohibit the development of the site for residential purposes. The site does not provide any form of public access being maintained as privately owned farmland.
- 7.4 The ecological appraisal has confirmed that the land use within the site is of limited ecological value. The main ecological interest associated with the site is concentrated to the boundary hedgerows, of which sections have been assessed as 'important' under the criteria of the Hedgerow Regulation. The proposals retain the important sections of hedgerow with any wider loss mitigated through new planting measures and the reinforcement and management of existing features. The features associated with the site are common, widespread in the local landscape setting and are replaceable.
- 7.5 The site is not part of a Conservation Area and does not contain any Listed Buildings. The baseline assessment has identified the contrast between the historic core to the north of the settlement with features such as Nunney Castle (SAM) and the Church of All Saints (Grade I Listed Building) and associated Conservation Area designation. This is in contrast to the southern half of the settlement defined by modern residential development.
- 7.6 This contrast is also acknowledged in the local landscape character assessment identifying the more sensitive northern half of the settlement within the Nunney, Nunney Brook and Egford Brook landscape character type, and the northern half of the settlement in the South East Farmland landscape character type.



- 7.7 The site presents a logical extension to the settlement building upon the modern residential expansion of the village set within a robust and enduring framework of settlement, highways, built-development and landscaping. Although the development of the site will extend the settlement towards the local ridgeline associated with the A361, the ridge is elevated from the site and defined by built-development and vegetation that will contain development with the site avoiding the creation of a conspicuous residential skyline.
- 7.8 This framework also helps to limit the visual envelope of the site to the settlement edge at the northern boundary; the ridgeline associated with the A361 to the southern boundary of the site; and the built-development and associated boundary vegetation to the east of the site. To the west views of the site are restricted to short sections of the PRoW network from which the site is viewed in the immediate context of the established modern residential setting associated with the southern half of the village.
- 7.9 The assessment of landscape and visual effect has confirmed that the loss of the fields within the site will have a limited adverse effect on the wider resource. The development of the site is likely to secure beneficial effects to the vegetation resource through the provision of a new area of public open space and structural landscaping measures. The proposed open space will secure a landscaped transition between the existing settlement and new development securing benefits for public leisure and recreation. The new open space will also secure extended grassland habitats with seasonal wetland areas securing biodiversity benefits.
- 7.10 The assessment has confirmed that the likely effect of development on the local landscape character will be limited due to the immediate relationship between the site and settlement, including the extended areas of development at Nunney Catch. This relationship has also restricted any significant visual effect of development to its immediate boundaries, and has demonstrated that these can be mitigated over time.
- 7.11 It is therefore concluded that the development proposal will not result in any adverse effect considered to be of significance to either the character or appearance of the site and surrounding landscape setting that would make this proposal unacceptable in landscape and visual terms.