

WHS Setting and AONB Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for Land at Ensleigh

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1. Introduction and Definitions

1.1. Refer to Map EN1 – Field Key

1.2. WHS Setting impact assessment uses relevant key aspects of significance (receptors) as developed in Bath WHS Setting SPD.

1.3. AONB impact assessment uses relevant key aspects of significance (receptors) as set out in AONB Management Plan 2013-2018 – Special Qualities of Significance.

1.4. Impact Assessment methodology is in principle as set out in the GLVIA 3rd Edition with one variation in the assessment of value of a receptor made for the WHS Setting receptors. It is taken as given that the WHS Setting is of international Importance and therefore receptors are of overall high value. However the WHS Setting SPD recognises that appropriate development is not precluded within the setting area and therefore guidance is given on assessing the value of particular aspects of significance receptors in the context of potential development sites. The gradings set out in the SPD are used here. There are no special modifications to the assessment of value set out in the AONB management plan and therefore the assessment of value for the AONB necessarily is as set out in the GLVIA 3rd Edition and is always given as high. This does not however preclude development in appropriate situations.

1.5. As recommended in the GLVIA 3rd Edition sensitivity, magnitude and significance of effects are scored on a simple low, low to medium, medium, medium to high and high scale. All effects of development were negative (detrimental) in the context of the WHS Setting and AONB.

1.6. To make the impact assessment more meaningful the site was assessed in relation to hypothetical two storey housing development type of similar density to that proposed for the MOD site.

2. Conclusions

2.1. Refer to Map EN2 and EN3

2.2. Development in Field 2 would have an unacceptable impact on all the aspects of significance assessed for both WHS Setting and AONB which could not be successfully mitigated. Field 2 has an open character and is much better related to the plateau countryside character and local playing field uses than field 1. Housing development introduces discordant urban built form out even further onto the open plateau compounding the existing anomalous MOD development which “leaks” development out of the bowl of the River Avon valley. Being so near to the edge of the plateau there is also potential visual intrusion into the wider countryside to the north east not just from buildings themselves but from the polluting effects of lighting at night. Field 2 is also in the immediate visual setting of Beckford’s Tower and although the current view to playing fields is not one that Georgians would have perceived, it is nevertheless open and quite well related to the countryside to the north. Housing development would further extend the urban character of the MOD into the Setting of the Tower divorcing it even more from its historical landscape setting.

2.3. In contrast Field 1 is well contained by the MOD offices and by mature trees and would form a natural additional area to the current MOD development site with suitable mitigation to ensure the protection of the mature trees and high quality design to enhance the setting of Beckford’s Tower.

3. WHS Setting Assessment- Site Description

3.1. The site comprises two areas of playing fields next to the Lansdown Road and adjacent to the north western boundary of the Ensleigh MOD site on the flat southern end of the Lansdown plateau. Field E1 is square, enclosed on three sides by dense mature trees and open to the south to part of the MOD site buildings. Immediately to the west of this field is Field E2 which although enclosed by mature trees along Lansdown Road and separating it from Field E1, is in contrast to Field E1 very open to the undeveloped plateau to the north and northwest Field E2 is much larger than E1, roughly square in shape.

3.2. The site is immediately across the road from Beckford’s Tower. The viewing area at the top of the

4. WHS Setting Assessment

<i>Landscape Character Effects</i>	
Relevant Key Aspects of Significance Assessed	Compact city form especially well defined edge
<i>Visual Effects</i>	
Relevant Key Aspects of Significance Assessed	Views to and from key C18th buildings (Beckford’s Tower); Distinct character and quality /views to and from historic routes into the city
<i>Historical Association Effects</i>	
Relevant Key Aspects of Significance Assessed	Historic routes, Georgian buildings & landmarks (Beckford’s Tower).
Sensitivity- Landscape Character, Visual Effects and Historical Association Effects Summarised (value + susceptibility to change caused by development effects)	<p><i>WHS Setting Value:</i> Field E1 contributes little in terms of either the compact city form or the historic routes being enclosed and hidden almost within the MOD site. It is however part of the immediate setting of Beckford’s tower and although to some extent contaminated by the detrimental appearance of the current MOD buildings it is a simple, contained green space surrounded by attractive mature trees. Overall the value of Field 1 is low to medium.</p> <p>Field E2 is more important in terms of the compact city. It relates strongly to the open agricultural land of the plateau to the west and north even though it is a playing field. It currently forms an intermediate land use between countryside and the urban edge of the MOD where it has encroached onto the plateau. It lies adjacent to the historic route of the Lansdown Road and its attractive boundary trees line the route; Field E2 is also more strongly part of the immediate setting to Beckford’s Tower and less contaminated by the MOD development. Overall its value is high</p> <p><i>Susceptibility To change caused by 2 storey estate type development:</i> Field E1 – low; Field E2 – High</p> <p>Field E1 is very enclosed and very much contained by the current MOD site which is already allocated for housing development. Additional housing would have low susceptibility</p>

	<p>in terms of change to the compact city form, historic routes and even Beckford's Tower assuming high quality build, design and two storey development. In contrast Field E2 would have high susceptibility to detrimental effect of housing development especially with respect to the compact city. The existing MOD development already takes development out of the containment of the landscape bowl of the river Avon valley and extending development even further out onto the open landscape of the plateau would be an unacceptable impact on the compact city receptor. For similar reasons the setting of Beckford's Tower to the east which is already somewhat compromised by the MOD development would be further degraded by development extending out onto the plateau.</p> <p>Overall Sensitivity: Field E1 – Low to Medium; Field E2 - High</p>
Magnitude of Effects	<p>Field E1 – Low to Medium; Field E2 – High</p> <p>Field E1 although relating strongly to the surrounding development and having little effect in terms of the compact city form, is currently an attractive undeveloped field with good mature trees. Development here would have some moderate effect in terms of scale and size of change more so than geographical extent in relation to the views from Beckford's Tower.</p> <p>Development in Field 2 would have a high magnitude of effect both in terms of geographical extent and scale / size of change for all the aspects of significance assessed.</p>
Significance of Landscape and Visual Effects	<p>Refer to Map EN 2 WHS Setting Significance Summary</p> <p>Field E1 – Low to medium negative; Field E2 – High negative</p>

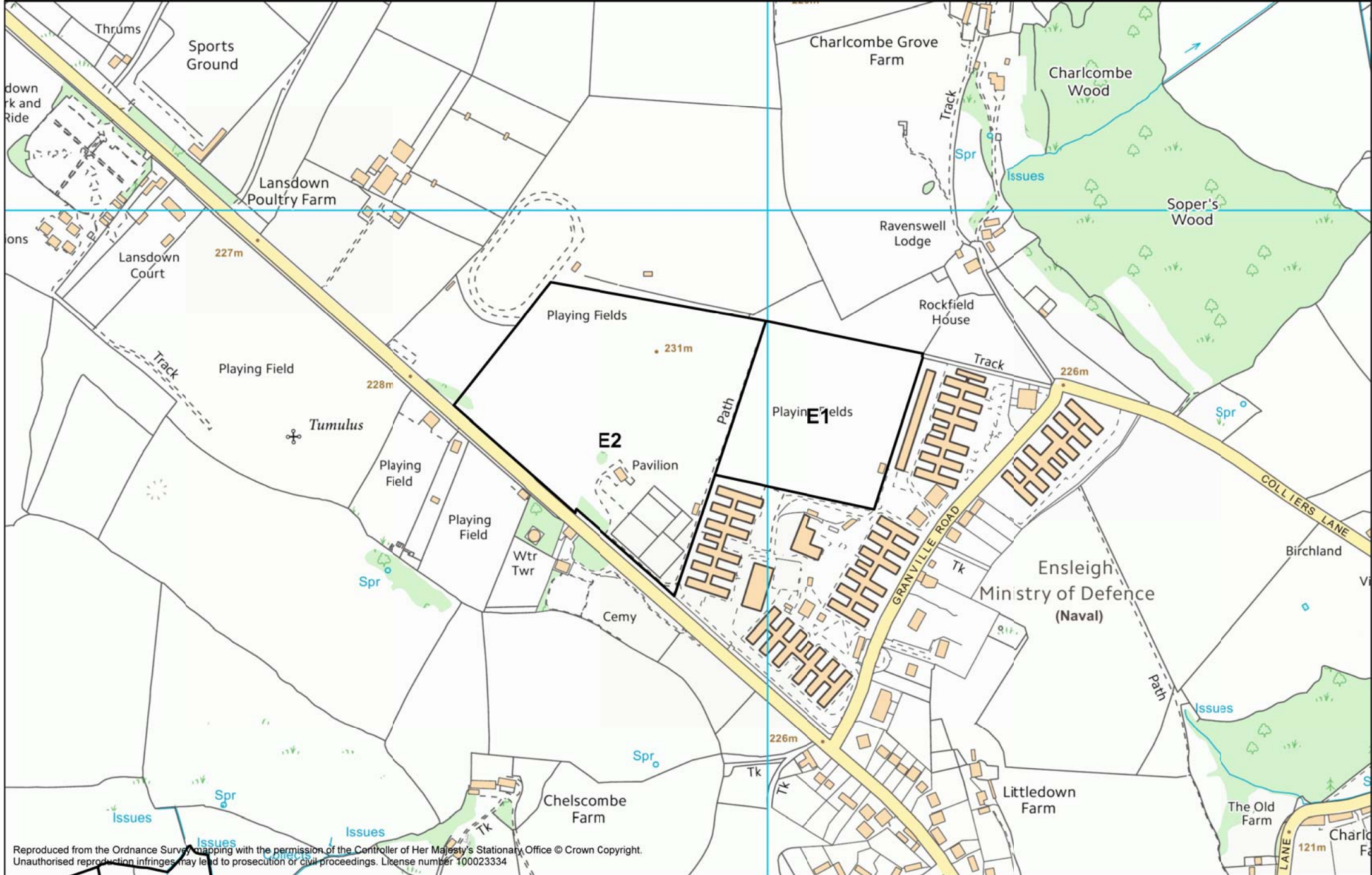
5. AONB Assessment- Site Description

- 5.1. The site comprises two areas of playing fields next to the Lansdown road and adjacent to the north western boundary of the Ensleigh MOD site on the flat southern end of the Lansdown plateau. Field E1 is square, enclosed on three sides by dense mature trees and open to the south to part of the MOD site buildings. Immediately to the west of this field is Field E2 which although enclosed by mature trees along Lansdown Road and separating it from Field E1, is in contrast to Field E1 very open to the undeveloped plateau to the north and northwest Field E2 is much larger than E1, roughly square in shape. There is dry stone walling along the road boundary of the field and in places on the northern boundary.
- 5.2. The site is immediately across the road from Beckford's Tower. The viewing area at the top of the Tower looks straight onto the site over the trees.

6. AONB Assessment

Relevant Key Aspects of Significance	Tranquillity; Dry Stone Walls; Historic Associations (Setting of Beckford's Tower)
Sensitivity (value + susceptibility to change caused by development effects)	<p><i>Value:</i> High</p> <p><i>Susceptibility:</i> To change caused by 2 storey estate type development: Field E1 – medium; Field E2 – medium to high</p> <p>Field E1 has low to medium tranquillity at the moment being adjacent to MOD offices (now mostly unoccupied) and being used as a sports field at intervals. Development would decrease its current state but its susceptibility to change caused by development is relatively low. As part of the setting for Beckford's Tower it has low to medium susceptibility given its rather compromised position partly surrounded by the MOD offices.</p> <p>Field E2 has medium to high tranquillity currently – its use for playing fields compromises tranquillity at times. Development would significantly reduce tranquillity especially with the spread of light at night out into the countryside. The size, openness and plateau position make it particularly susceptible to change. It is immediately across the road from Beckford's Tower and it would be highly negatively susceptible to the effects of development urbanising the current view.</p> <p>Overall Sensitivity: Field E1 – Medium; Field E2 – High</p>
Magnitude of Effects	<p>Field E1 – Low to Medium; Field E2 – High</p> <p>Field E1 although relating strongly to the surrounding development and having little effect in terms of the</p>

	<p>compact city form, is currently an attractive undeveloped field with good mature trees.</p> <p>Development here would have some moderate effect in terms of scale and size of change than geographical extent in relation to the views from Beckford's Tower.</p> <p>Development in Field 2 would have a high magnitude of effect both in terms of geographical extent and scale / size of change for both Beckford's Tower setting and tranquillity.</p>
<p>Significance of Landscape and Visual Effects</p>	<p>Refer to Map EN 3 – AONB Significance Summary</p> <p>Field E1 – Medium negative; Field E2 – High negative</p>



WHS Setting and AONB Assessment

Map EN2 - WHS Setting Significance Summary (Scale 1:6,000)

