

Environmental Appraisal
Volume I

13. Landscape and Visual

Whilst the site is outside of the AONB, the effects on views to and from the AONB will be considered in line with the policies set out in the AONB Management Plan.

Registered Historic Parks and Gardens

The Register of Parks and Gardens is a national record maintained by English Heritage. The main purpose of this register is to help ensure that features and qualities of national importance are safeguarded during on-going management or if any change is being considered which could affect them. Most sites identified through the Register as being of a sufficiently high level of interest to merit a national designation are designated Grade I or Grade II. There are two Registered Parks or Gardens within 2km of the site within the county of Berkshire which are Grade II. These are:

Aldermaston Court: Immediately abutting the northern AWE site boundary. Remnants of mid and late 19th century gardens within medieval parkland, at most extensive 250ha, now 55ha, considerably changed by extensive mid and later 20th century building.

Wasing Park: Approximately 2km to the north-west of the site. 19th and 20th century gardens set within a larger estate comprising parkland, woodland and agricultural uses.

The proposed development has no direct physical landscape effects on these two parks. They have however been included in the visual impact survey in order to assess any visual effects in views from the parks.

13.2.3 Regional Context

Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG 9 March 2001) provides a regional framework for the preparation of local authority development plans. It states that ... development plans should accord with the guidance in PPG/PPS with regards to "protecting and enhancing existing and new areas designated for their landscape value... and/or ... cultural value".

The draft South East Plan (submitted to government in 2006) which will replace RPG 9 states under Policy C2, "Priority should be given to conservation and enhancement of natural beauty in the region's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and planning decisions should have regard to their setting".

Berkshire Structure Plan 2001-2016 (Adopted 2005)

Policy EN1: Landscape states that "The distinctiveness of county and district level Landscape Character Types and Areas will be maintained inline with the strategy option developed for each area... and that..within the North Wessex Downs AONB the primary aim of conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape will be given priority over other considerations. Development which affects the AONB will only be permitted where it would support the conservation or enhancement of the AONB..."

The Structure Plan makes reference to the Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (BLCA) and to the North Wessex Downs AONB Integrated Landscape Assessment and states that the BLCA will act as "...the context for

the effects on views to and from the AONB, the effects on views to and from the AONB will be considered in line with the policies set out in the AONB Management Plan.

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"To promote and enhance the natural beauty and special landscape qualities of the AONB;

- a) to respect scenic quality, sense of remoteness and historic landscapes;
- b) the sense of place, including local character of buildings and settlements; and
- c) the setting of settlements;

in the whole of the countryside."

13.2.4 Local Context

Policy OV2 states that development proposals should "...show a high standard of design including landscape treatment which respects the character and appearance of the area; and retain and protect important landscape and nature conservation features and provide for further landscape treatment where relevant to the safeguarding of local amenity..."

The key landscape aims of the Local Plan as set out in Chapter 2, Section A are as follows:

- (i) to sustain, conserve and enhance the landscape diversity, character and quality of West Berkshire's countryside;
- a) to protect and enhance the natural beauty and special landscape qualities of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty...

b) to protect important landscape, nature conservation and heritage features from damage due to the adverse effects of development and to encourage their proper management where appropriate;

- c) to provide for development and change that would benefit the rural economy while protecting and enhancing the landscape and overall environment of the area."

Policy ENV1 states that "The Council in considering proposals for development will seek to conserve and enhance the special features and diversity of the

the development of district-level assessments... which themselves ...should act as a guide to local plans and development control by indicating the particular local qualities of the landscape, which development proposals should respect. Development proposals should be informed by and fully justified in terms of the BLCA".

Hampshire Structure Plan 1996 – 2011 (Adopted February 2000)

The environment chapter of the Hampshire Structure Plan sets out the policies in relation to the landscape as follows:

Policy E6

"To ensure that development maintains and enhances areas of distinctive landscape character, local planning policies will pay particular regard to:

- a) the need to respect scenic quality, sense of remoteness and historic landscapes;
- b) the sense of place, including local character of buildings and settlements; and
- c) the setting of settlements;

West Berkshire District Council Local Plan (Adopted 14 June 2002)

Policy OV2 states that development proposals should "...show a high standard of design including landscape treatment which respects the character and appearance of the area; and retain and protect important landscape and nature conservation features and provide for further landscape treatment where relevant to the safeguarding of local amenity..."

The key landscape aims of the Local Plan as set out in Chapter 2, Section A are as follows:

- (i) to sustain, conserve and enhance the landscape diversity, character and quality of West Berkshire's countryside;
- a) to protect and enhance the natural beauty and special landscape qualities of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty...

b) to protect important landscape, nature conservation and heritage features from damage due to the adverse effects of development and to encourage their proper management where appropriate;

- c) to provide for development and change that would benefit the rural economy while protecting and enhancing the landscape and overall environment of the area."

Policy ENV1 states that "The Council in considering proposals for development will seek to conserve and enhance the special features and diversity of the

different 'landscape character areas' found within West Berkshire." Details of the landscape character areas can be found in the Newbury District-Wide Landscape Assessment.

Policy ENV.5 states that "The Council will balance development proposals against the criteria for settings in the District-Wide Landscape Assessment and against their effects on the open or rural appearance or character, in the areas listed below which are of special significance in maintaining the setting or individual character of settlements... locations to which this policy will be applied are... c) the northern edge of Tadley and Pamber Heath."

Key conservation aims of the plan include:

(iv) to preserve and enhance the Conservation Areas in West Berkshire. Any new development in Conservation Areas need to be appropriate and sympathetic to the special character of the area. It must also address the quality of the townscape as well as the protection of individual buildings and preserving a sense of place;

(v) to support the preservation, restoration and management of historic parks and gardens including their settings;

(vi) to support the preservation and management of historic landscapes and battlefield sites..."

Policy ENV.35 states that "The Council will normally refuse development which would have an adverse effect on the site, setting or character of any part of the grounds of historic parks and gardens. The locations to which this policy will apply include... Aldermaston Court... Wasing Place."

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Adopted Local Plan 1996-2011 (Adopted 2006)

As the proposed HEFF project site is located outside the Borough boundary, the policies contained within the Local Plan are not directly applicable to the proposed development. The most relevant policies are set out below to inform and add context.

Policy E3 states that "Development within Conservation Areas, or on sites outside where development would affect the setting of the Conservation Area, will be permitted provided that the proposals preserve or enhance their special character or appearance..."

Policy E6 states that "Planning permission will only be granted where it is demonstrated that the proposals will be sympathetic to the landscape character and quality of the area concerned.. Development proposals should... respect and improve... the particular qualities of the relevant Landscape Character Area as defined in the Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Assessment, visual amenity and scenic quality... the setting of a settlement, including important views to, across and out of settlements... the local character of buildings and settlements, including important open areas... trees, hedgerows, water features and other landscape elements and features... historic landscapes, features and elements... Consideration will also be given to the impact that development would

have on a sense of place, sense of remoteness or tranquillity, and the quiet enjoyment of the landscape from public rights of way..."

There are no landscape designations within the HEFF application site.

The landscape and visual assessment of the HEFF proposals has considered the effects on the local landscape character areas and visual effects from the AONB, designated parks and local conservation areas. These are dealt with in the technical report in Appendix D of EA Volume II and are summarised below.

Figure 13.1 illustrates the landscape designations within the study area.

13.3 Assessment Methodology and Significance

Criteria

13.3.1 Approach

The main guidance used for this assessment is "Guidelines for Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment" (GLVIA) published by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and The Landscape Institute (2002) and the "Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland" published by the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2002).

West Berkshire Council has been consulted regarding the approach and methodology and baseline landscape character studies used for the assessment. The assessment has considered the Application site and the site setting in the wider area of West Berkshire and the Hampshire borders.

The North Wessex Downs AONB office has been consulted regarding strategic views to be assessed from the AONB in accordance with Action A9 of the North Wessex Downs Management Plan 2004. However this Action has not yet been completed. The effects on views from the AONB have therefore been assessed for the elevated ridgelines with views which were identified as lying within the zone of visual influence.

13.3.2 Assessment Methodology

Evaluation of the Existing Landscape

The first stage of the assessment has established the landscape and visual baseline on and surrounding the site through desktop studies and field surveys. Desktop studies have included a review of existing information from the Countryside Agency and contained in Structure and Local Plans, together with existing contextual survey reports for the AWE Aldermaston site (as prepared by Atkins and RPS), maps, aerial photographs and landscape studies.

Baseline field surveys were undertaken in April 2006 and March 2007 which identified existing landform, significant vegetation, landscape character and the visual receptors within the study area. A photographic survey has been undertaken from selected viewpoints.

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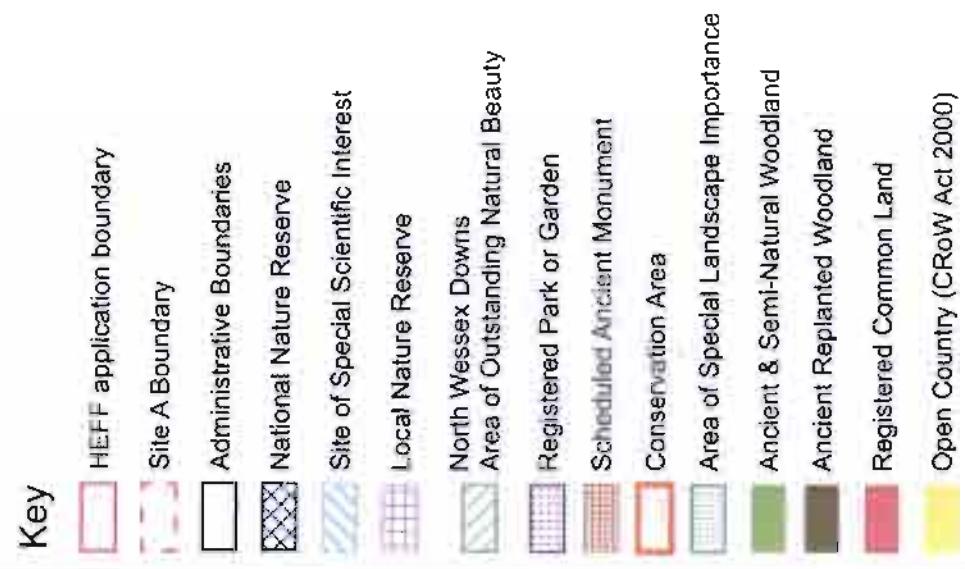
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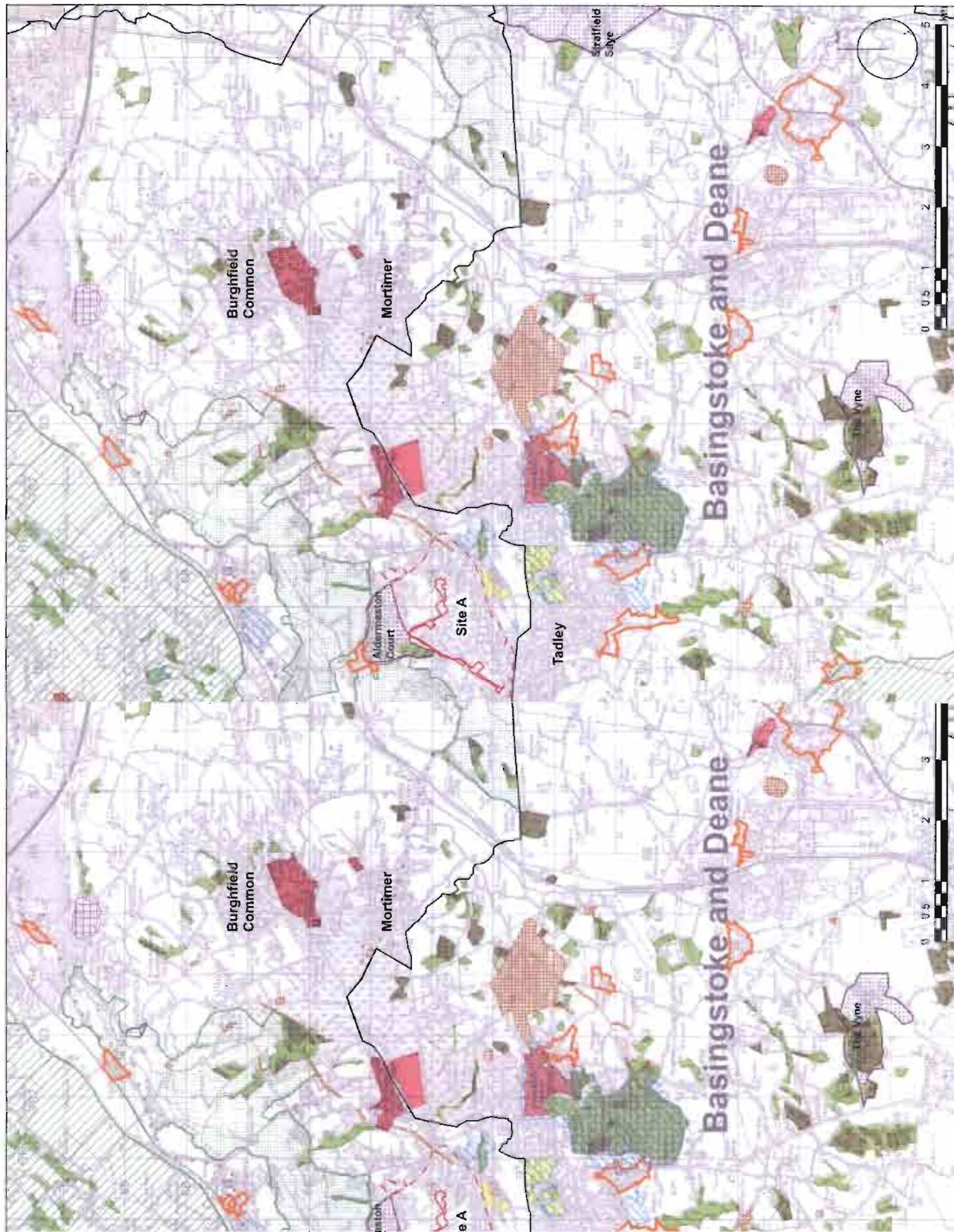
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Drawing No:

Environmental Designations

Figure 13.1



Nature Reserve, Common Land, Open Country and Ancient Woodland boundaries

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Adopted Local Plan (adopted 2006)

Borough Adopted Local Plan (adopted 2006)

In addition to the above, landscape 'value' is concerned with the relative value or importance that is attached to different landscapes. The assessment has considered statutory designations and takes into account other values to society which may be expressed by the local community or consultees. Table 13-2 sets out the criteria and definitions used in the baseline assessment to determine landscape value:

Table 13-2 Landscape Value Criteria

Value	Level of Importance	Definition*
Very High	International	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very attractive and rare. Exceptional landscape quality. No or limited potential for substitution e.g. World Heritage Site, AONB or key elements/features within them.
High	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very attractive or attractive scenic quality and in part rare. High or good landscape quality. Limited potential for substitution e.g. National Park, AONB, AGLV or key elements within them.
Medium	Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Typical and common place or in part unusual. Ordinary landscape quality. e.g. Generally undesignated but value expressed through literature and cultural associations or through designation.
Low	Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor landscape quality. Can be substituted e.g. Certain individual landscape elements or features may be worthy of conservation and landscape either identified or would benefit from restoration or enhancement.

Source: Modification of criteria contained within the [Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment \(2002\)](#). *Definitions, examples and features are not exclusive to each value category i.e. not all parts of an AONB can necessarily be considered either attractive or very attractive depending upon local character and condition.

Visual Analysis

Key TERRA-FIRMA six software was used to help model the theoretical zone of visual influence (ZVI) of the tallest elements of the existing buildings within the application area and AWE site. The ZVI can be defined as the area from which all or part of the existing buildings may be visible. The ZVI was prepared for the tallest buildings on the AWE site, adjacent to the application site. The buildings and stacks of chimneys or lightning towers are differentiated by colour for both the existing and proposed development. Further details of the models are given in Appendix D of EA Volume II.

The findings of the ZVI were supported by desktop and field studies which suggested that the visual impact of the proposed re-development could be considered in three broad categories:

- Long-distance views, defined as those from vantage points located within 5km from the site.

- Middle-distance viewpoints are those that fall between 5km and 10km from the site; and
- long-distance viewpoints lying beyond 10km of the site boundary.

Views from much beyond 15km have not been considered. The ZVI of the existing buildings on and adjacent to the site are shown on Figure 13-2, together with the key areas of screening vegetation at 15m and settlements at 9m.

The ZVI for the baseline situation shows that the existing buildings are visible from within a 15km radius from the centre of the site and primarily to the north and south of the site. Whilst the site lies at between 100 and 105m AOD, it is enclosed by substantial layers of woodland, heathland and treebelts. The existing hedgerows and individual treebelts have not been considered in the ZVI model and therefore provide further enclosure to the site than the model suggests (hence the model is conservative).

Supporting photographs from key viewpoints with the locations and angles of view shown are included in Appendix D of EA Volume II. Groups of visual receptors affected by the existing development during the day and by associated lighting at night have been identified and the nature of the existing view is described in the Visual Impact Schedules contained in Appendix D of EA Volume II.

Receptor Sensitivity

The sensitivity of visual receptors is dependent upon the location and context of the viewpoint, whether continuous, fragmented, or intermittent (i.e. the dynamic nature of a view gained while traveling through an area) the importance of views and the occupation and activity of the visual receptor. Influences such as the number of receptors affected, popularity of views and the significance of the views in relation to valued landscapes or features also determines the importance of views.

A summary of receptor sensitivity is provided below:

- Higher sensitivity receptors: includes viewers within residential properties (grouped in settlement clusters) and Public Rights of Way users, in particular views from recreational and long-distance footpaths (such as Wayfarer's Walk to the south-west, Beacon Hill to the west and those footpaths within the North Wessex Downs AONB where the viewer's attention and interest may be focused on the landscape) and from landscapes of acknowledged importance or value. The visual sensitivity to lighting impacts at night on residential properties is generally considered to be less sensitive than changes in daytime views as the majority of visual receptors would be located within lit rooms, often with the curtains drawn.
- Medium sensitivity receptors: may include people engaged in sports / formal outdoor recreation; dynamic views gained by the traveling population through or past the landscape.

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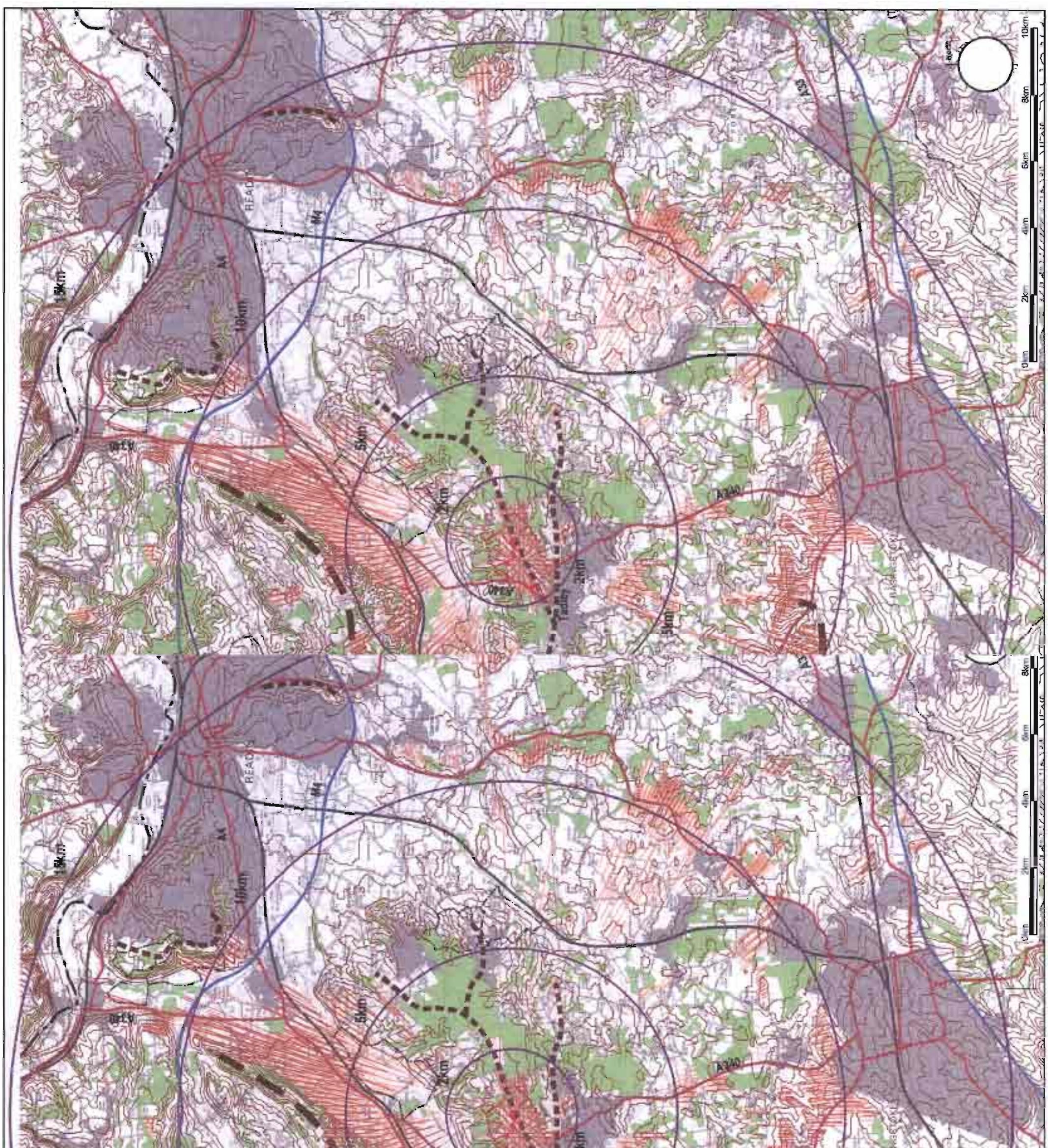
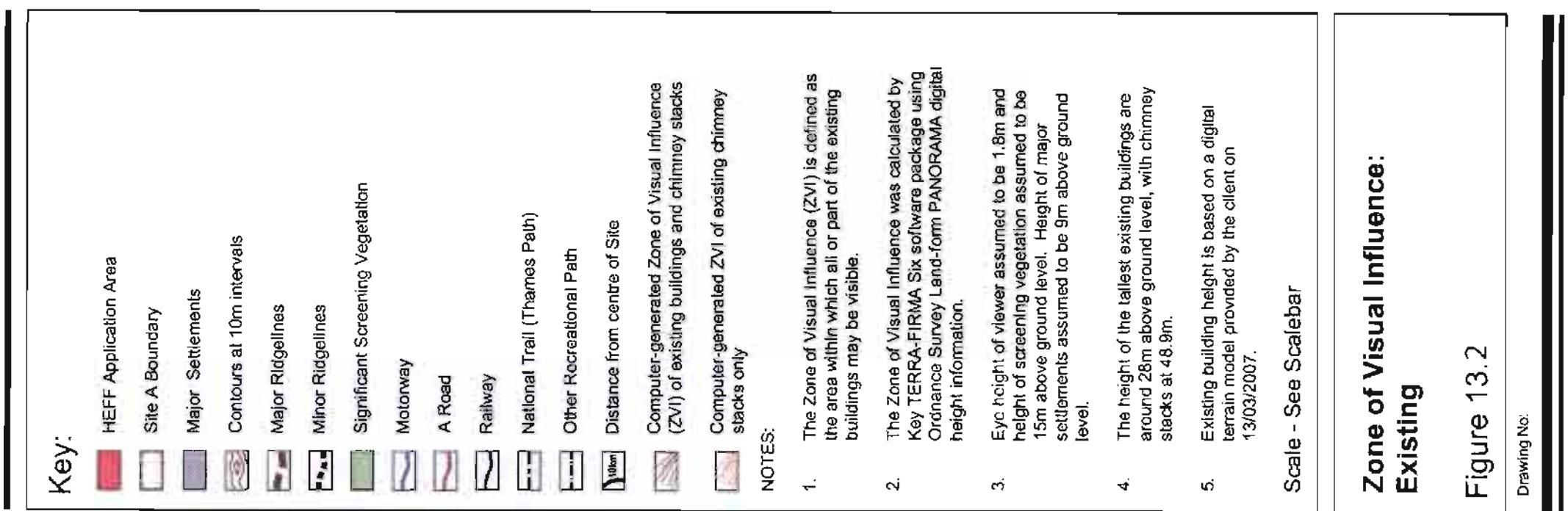
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- Medium sensitivity receptors: may include people engaged in sports / formal outdoor recreation; dynamic views gained by the traveling population through or past the landscape.

Criteria	Major	Minor	Minor or Negligible	Native or Non-native
Criteria	Major	Minor	Minor or Negligible	Native or Non-native



The site is contained within the context of three identified landscape character areas:

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Table 13-7: Site Landscape Character Areas

Landscape Character Area	Key Characteristics	Landscape Quality	Landscape Value	Sensitivity to Change
1. Contained Intensive Industrial Plateau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area of concentrated industrial buildings; Chimneys, lighting columns, floodlights and double fencing; Flat topography; Occasional small isolated trees; 	Poor	Low	Low
2. Resturban plateau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area of disturbed ground; Some of car parks and construction sites; Flat topography; Mature vegetation; 	Poor	Low	Low
3. Urban Core	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wide road with car expert parking; One, two storey and three storey office buildings with flat roofs, interspersed with car parks; Lighting columns; Flat topography; Occasional street trees; Wide verges containing pedestrian paths; A large open area containing grass, picket fences; Large expanse of car parking with a cluster of small buildings and pavilions surrounded by formal hedges; Flat topography; Framed by mature tree lines. 	Ordinary	Med	Low
4. Tadley Urban Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The settlement of Tadley, which contrasts sharply with the surrounding agricultural and heathland landscapes. The town has predominantly developed since the 1950's although there are scattered thatched cottages dating from the 17th century. Historically, the area supported a brick industry at Tadley Common. The development is generally one and two storeys and suburban in character, with views restricted by the built form. This is of low landscape quality, value and sensitivity to change. 	Ordinary	Med	Med
5. Haughurst Hill Heath-associated Pasture and Woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open heath landscape area containing roads, car parking and hedge; Flat topography; Constrained by significant birch and oak woodland belt; Termed office building and car park set within a landscape dominated by heath woodland species and rhododendrons; Sunken topography with steep slopes containing the area; Parkland landscape associated with the local area; 	Ordinary	Med	Med
6. Old In The Cheshire Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This character area comprises mixed agricultural, residential and wooded area ranging from the local hills at Brimpton Common and Ashford Hill to the south-facing hillside at Inhurst. The area is structured by relatively straight roads with paddocks and the low-density linear settlement patterns typical of heathland enclosure. Mature oak and pines are common along roadsides, restricting hilltop views. This area is of good landscape quality, of medium landscape value and moderate sensitivity to change. 	Ordinary	Med	Med
7. In The Edge Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The area is of good landscape quality, of medium landscape value and moderate sensitivity to change. 	Good	Med	Moderate
8. Contained Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open heath landscape area containing roads, car parking and hedge; Flat topography; Constrained by significant birch and oak woodland belt; Termed office building and car park set within a landscape dominated by heath woodland species and rhododendrons; Sunken topography with steep slopes containing the area; Parkland landscape associated with the local area; 	Ordinary	Med	Med
9. In The Edge Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This character area comprises mixed agricultural, residential and wooded area ranging from the local hills at Brimpton Common and Ashford Hill to the south-facing hillside at Inhurst. The area is structured by relatively straight roads with paddocks and the low-density linear settlement patterns typical of heathland enclosure. Mature oak and pines are common along roadsides, restricting hilltop views. This area is of good landscape quality, of medium landscape value and moderate sensitivity to change. 	Good	Med	Moderate
10. Open Green Heath Plateau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extensive area of heathy grassland, mounds and low protracted heather; Single stone wall, roofed buildings; Scattered groups of mature trees, including a few more ornamental species; Landscape features include Grim's Bank, constrained by low fence, a spine plantation and a large pond and isolated woodland; Single track roads, stile, sheep pens; Prominently flat topography; Man-made mound and water feature. 	Ordinary /good	Med	Moderate
11. Wooded Plateau Edge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works constrained by dense tree-line; Roads, fencing; Steeply undulating topography; Wide road with no access, parking – former runway; Constrained by high fencing on either side. 	Ordinary /good	Med	Moderate
12. Wide Plateau Corridor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wide road with no access, parking – former runway; Constrained by high fencing on either side. 	Poor	Low	Low

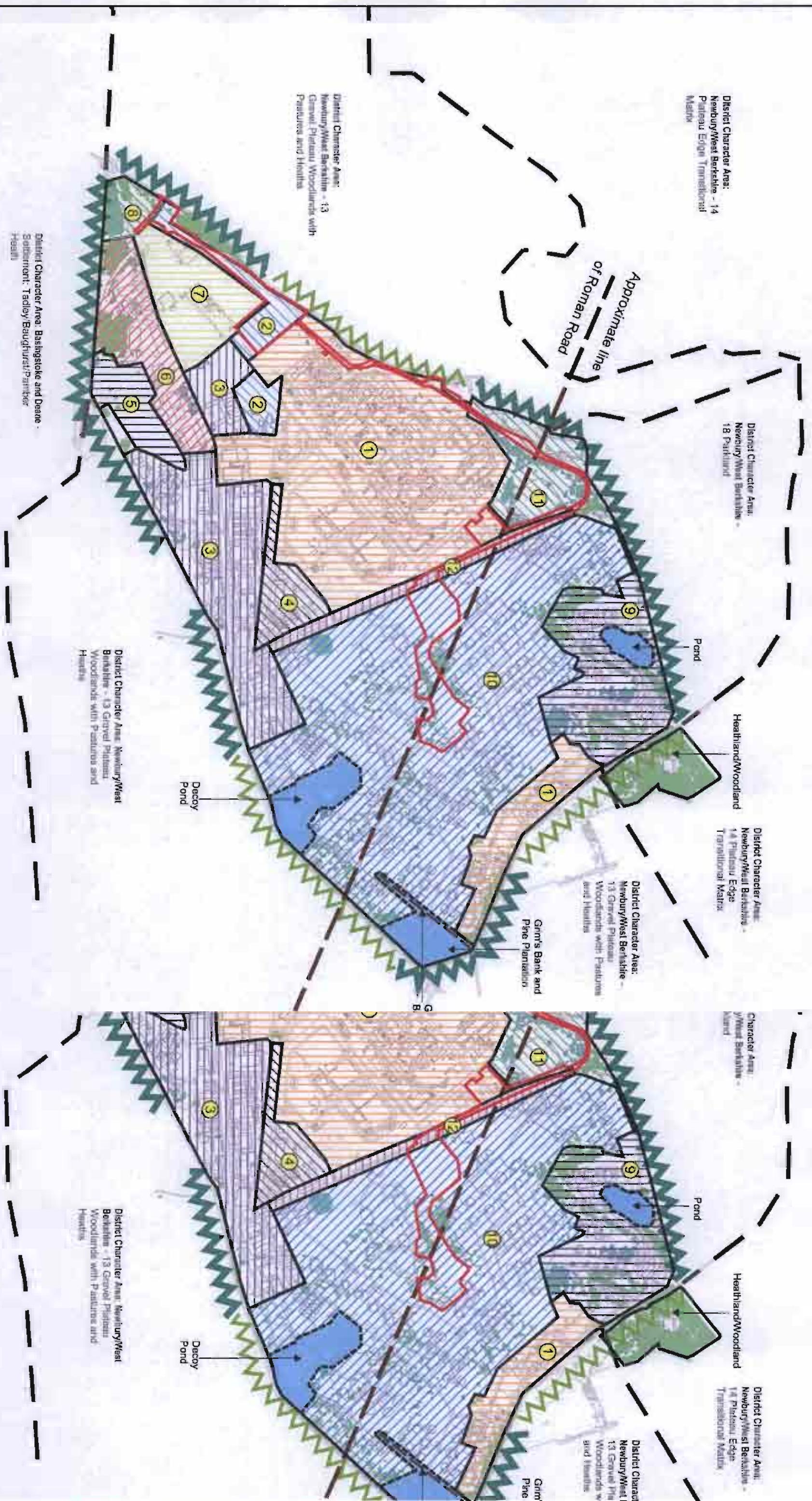
A more detailed site based landscape character survey was carried out by RPS in June 2005 to determine the broad character areas across the site. The character areas have been classified in relation to current land-use, landform and vegetation cover together with other landscape characteristics within each area. These are shown on Figure 13-3.

13.4.4 Site Wide Landscape Character

A more detailed site based landscape character survey was carried out by RPS in June 2005 to determine the broad character areas across the site. The character areas have been classified in relation to current land-use, landform and vegetation cover together with other landscape characteristics within each area. These are shown on Figure 13-3.

The proposed HEFF application site lies within or adjacent to the following landscape character areas, which are described in terms of their key landscape characteristics, their landscape quality, value and sensitivity to change in Table 13-7.

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3.4.6 Application Site Description

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The HEFF application boundary contains the contractors site entrance via the West Gate to the AWE site and construction workers car park. The layout of these areas is already approved by West Berkshire District Council for temporary use as contractors access and parking. Access between this zone and the construction site and compounds in the eastern sector of the site would be via a network of existing roads and tracks. These run along the northern boundary of the site which in places abuts the A340. This access route joins the northern end of Griffin Road. Although these areas are within the proposed HEFF red line application boundary they already have planning consent and/or are existing site access routes. They are therefore not assessed in detail as part of this landscape and visual impact assessment.

Griffin Road was formerly a runway and it bisects the AWE site north south. The proposed red line boundary includes two proposed contractors compounds which abut Griffin Road to the east and west.

Phase 1

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Temporary Effects

Temporary effects are associated with construction works and would include the construction of the two contractors compound areas, associated welfare facilities together with construction vehicles access, materials, topsoil and subsoil storage and any craneage used to construct the buildings.

Permanent Effects

The longer term effects would include the operation of the completed HEFF facility buildings, together with access. Night-time effects upon landscape character and visual amenity are also considered in order to assess the likely effects of lighting elements of the proposed development.

The assessment of landscape and visual effects takes into consideration the mitigation measures described in below to avoid, reduce and where possible remedy adverse effects.

13.5 Mitigation Proposals

13.5.2 Mitigation Proposals

Building Layout and Design

Mitigation measures have been developed as part of an iterative design process to help avoid or reduce the potential adverse landscape and visual effects of the proposed redevelopment. The location of the proposed buildings and access on previously developed land, the position and arrangement of the new buildings and their height, form and colour will have a considerable influence upon the potential impact of the proposed redevelopment. The new buildings and associated construction compounds would be wholly located within the existing site boundary within the eastern part of the site.

The style and form of the buildings has allowed some functions to extend beyond the basic rectangular plan form, so that the building sides are broken up and the roofline is varied.

Whilst the stucco embossed natural finish aluminium roofing will reflect sunlight and have a silver appearance when new, over a period of time it weathers to a dull mid grey. Factory finished roof sheeting has a natural reflectance which is dulled with aging in the same way.

13.5 Impact Assessment and Mitigation Measures

13.5.1 Identification of Impacts

The proposed HEFF construction is programmed for a period of 24 months.



Additional Measures

Tablant	Additional Measures
e in Local Landscapes from Alderman Pasture; Woodlan	A further mitigation measure under consideration is the removal of detracting features. As such the sequential removal of the redundant steam pipelines which run through the site area is being undertaken as part of a corporate energy strategy review.
Tadley Urban Area EA	Topsoil stripping and site storage will be associated with the construction to protect this resource. Once the development is complete the topsoil would be reused and reseeded to reinstate the temporary contractors compound and construction area east of Griffin Road.
Haughurst Hill Heath Associated Pasture and Woodland	Earthworks generated by the excavation of the building foundations and SUDS ponds will be reused to form mounds which are characteristic of the eastern sector of the AWE site. The mounds will increase the containment of views to the new development.
Site Landsc Character Sals	Lighting Design Whilst a lighting design for the Proposed Development has not yet fully been prepared, this section sets out the requirements in order to reduce the night-time effects of lighting within the application area. Due to the unique operational requirements of the site, lighting of the Proposed Development is key to maintaining site security during the hours of darkness.
1. Contain to Intensive Local Plateau	Much of the site and the perimeter fence are currently lit with a range of different types of lighting, to aid site security. The existing perimeter fence will continue to be lit throughout the construction and operational phases. The design of any new lighting will seek to minimise lighting impacts wherever possible.
2. Dislur site Plateau	The lighting of the new buildings and security fencing has the potential to increase light levels, affecting the night-time perception of the site. The use of floodlighting and up-lighting to the buildings will sought to be minimised wherever possible. The guidance set out in 'Lighting in the Countryside: Towards Good Practice' by the Institute of Lighting Engineers (1996) should be used to inform the lighting design. The use of flat-glass and hooded directional lanterns for the building and access circulation would reduce the night-time effects of light pollution. The number of lighting columns should be restricted wherever possible to minimise street clutter. The height of the columns should be limited to below the existing tree canopy to ensure that individual lights do not appear above the tree line, which would have an effect on the views from the AONB to the north of the site. These factors are to be considered in order to reduce the night-time effects.
3. Urban Cor to Ings	
7. Pleas are Open Sp	
8. Conta rch Space	
9. Intimate will Enclosed Tree - mal	
10. Oper Health Pl	
11. Woon Plateau	
12. Wide Corridor	

Table 13.8 Landscape Effects

Local Landscape Character Areas	Nature of Effects	Scale of Change	Duration	Significance of Landscape Effects
Type	Direct/Indirect			
Aldermaston Park Pasture and Woodland Fringe	Construction Operation	Indirect	Temporary	Minor adverse
		Night-time	Indirect	Negligible/ neutral
Tadley Urban Area	Construction Operation	Indirect	Temporary	Minor
		Night-time	Indirect	Permanent
Haughurst Hill Heath Associated Pasture and Woodland	Construction Operation	Indirect	Temporary	Neutral
		Night-time	Indirect	Permanent
		N/A	N/A	N/A
		N/A	N/A	N/A
Site Landscape Character Area	Nature of Effects	Scale of Change	Duration	Significance of Landscape Effects
Type	Direct/Indirect			
1. Contained Intensive Industrial Plateau	Construction Operation	Direct	Temporary	Neutral
		Night-time	Direct	Negligible
2. Disturbed Plateau	Construction Operation	Direct	Temporary	Neutral
		Night-time	Direct	Neutral
3. Urban Cor	Construction Operation	Indirect	Temporary	Minor Adverse
		Night-time	Indirect	Negligible
7. Plateau Formal Open Space	Construction Operation	Indirect	Temporary	Neutral
		Night-time	Indirect	N/A
8. Contained Open Space	Construction Operation	Direct	Temporary	Neutral
		Night-time	Indirect	N/A
9. Intimate Enclosed Parkland	Construction Operation	Indirect	Temporary	Negligible
		Night-time	Indirect	Negligible/ neutral
10. Open Grassy Heath Plateau	Construction Operation	Direct	Temporary	Neutral
		Night-time	Indirect	Moderate adverse
11. Wooded Plateau Edge	Construction Operation	Direct	Temporary	Minor adverse becoming neutral to slight beneficial as plantings establishes
		Night-time	Indirect	Negligible
12. Wide Plateau Corridor	Construction Operation	Direct & Indirect	Temporary	Negligible adverse
		Night-time	Indirect	Negligible

Significant landscape effects are shown in italics (ie. those deemed moderate or above)

Sign above

13.6 Landscape Effects

The landscape effects upon the local and site character areas during the construction and operational phases of the proposed development are summarised in Table 13.8 and further described and assessed in the following paragraphs.

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Aldermaston Park Pasture and Woodland Fringe

This character area contains part of the Grade II registered Park and Gardens of Aldermaston Court. It is wooded to the north and south of the AWE site and provides a wooded backdrop and containment to the site. AWE has little influence over the wider part of the character area to the north east as it dips away from the plateau towards Padworth. There are no direct effects on the landscape of this character area.

Construction Effects: The urbanising presence of construction traffic, construction compounds and a tower crane on the adjacent character area would have a temporary, indirect, minor adverse landscape effect on the margins of this character area.

Operational Effects: There is some very limited intervisibility between this character zone and the relatively small scale development site. Eventually however the slightly adverse effects of the development and loss of trees would be mitigated by the proposed new tree and woodland copse planting which would be in keeping with the character of the area. There would therefore be an initial temporary Indirect, negligible adverse effect which would become neutral in 10 to 15 years when the planting establishes.

Night-time Character Effect: would also be negligible initially becoming neutral in 10 to 15 years as the tree planting matures and screens much of the additional light impact from this character area.

Tadley Urban Area

This urban character area borders the AWE site to the south west. It is separated from the proposed HEFF development area by the existing more urban western sector of the AWE site. It does however abut the southern edge of the Western Gate where HEFF construction traffic and contractors car parking would use the areas already provided to service the redevelopment of office accommodation on the site. This has been assessed for the NOA Environmental Statement (ES). The proposed HEFF development would not change the character impacts of the proposals (or the assessment).

Haughurst Hill Heath Associated Pasture and Woodland

This character area which frames the AWE site to the west and north west and contains significant areas of woodlands is physically separated from the proposed HEFF development site by the western more urban sector of the AWE site and by development which abuts the A340. It contains some of the original features of the Wasing Park parkland/woodland landscape. The HEFF development would have no landscape character effects on this area.

Contained Intensive Industrial Plateau

This character area is primarily defined by the concentration of industrial buildings and flat topography. The buildings are interspersed with a range of hard spaces which include car parking, set behind an inner security fence and roads.

This area has intervisibility with the contractor's access and compound and car parking which has been assessed for the NOA ES. The HEFF project would utilise these provisions but would not change the character of appearance of the proposals which have already been assessed.

The area accommodates part of the contractor's access and proposed construction compound for the HEFF development to the east. There would also be intervisibility with the proposed HEFF development area. However, the buildings in this part of the site are very large industrial scale with little or no outlook and this low quality, low sensitive area can accommodate the proposed changes without any negative effect.

Disturbed Plateau

This area comprises vacant plots, temporary parking and construction related activities for the current site redevelopment projects. The HEFF development would make use of the contractor's access and parking areas but would not change any of the proposals, landscape character or the assessment of effects considered for the NOA ES. The HEFF built development is separated from this area by the intensive Industrial plateau area so no operational landscape effects would occur.

Urban Core

The Urban Core character area lies adjacent to the areas where the proposed HEFF development and the contractors temporary compounds would be located. These aspects of development would be some distance away and separated from the edge of the urban core by other low rise (up to 10m) development and scattered mounds and trees in grassland. The contractor's compounds would have a temporary urbanising influence which would be reinstated after use. The development would be perceived as additional industrial building introduced into the adjacent large scale grass and heathy tree scattered area. The urban core is ordinary quality and would have a low sensitivity to the proposed change, additional lighting introduced by the development would be perceptible but in the context of the already lit site. The proposed planting would in time contain the new development and mitigate any adverse effects.

Construction Effects: Temporary, indirect minor adverse landscape effect.

Operational Effect: Indirect minor adverse effect becoming neutral in 10-15 years with the planting mitigation.

Plateau Formal Open Space

This character area abuts the contractor's access and car parking which has already been assessed in the NOA ES. During the HEFF development the facility would be used but there would be no further landscape effects and no change to the assessment given in the NOA ES. The area is remote from the HEFF operational development and construction compounds.

Ward

Whilst

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Ward

Whilst

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A lighting scheme has yet to be prepared for the proposed construction and operational phases. A broad outline assessment of the likely effects has therefore been based on additional access, building and security fencing/lighting within the application area, in order to facilitate health, safety and site security requirements.

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13.7.1 When the Oper plane?

Figure 13.1 shows the proposed new buildings are located in a lit site, which extends to the edges of the whole AWE site (as a result of the security requirements of lighting the perimeter fence). Any new lighting will therefore be viewed in the context of the existing lit site. The introduction of lighting to those areas is likely to result in the overall net increase of lighting in this sector of the AWE site. However, the use of flat glass lanterns for road areas and directional down lighting, together with limited inclination, would help minimise light spill in to the night sky.

The proposals would intensifying the lit areas of the site in the east. Overall, the effects of lighting will be minimised wherever possible and it is considered that the proposed lighting will have a negligible adverse impact on the site and local landscape.

Lighting the application site would be unlikely to result in any change to the character of the views from within the AONB.

13.7 Visual Effects

13.7.1 Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI)

The ZVI for the existing site is shown on Figure 13.5. The ZVI for the proposed HEFF development is shown on Figure 13.6. They model the topography with areas of significant screening vegetation assumed at 15m and settlements at 9m above ground level. The HEFF buildings are modelled at 12m with the lightning lattice towers at 28m above ground level. The zone of visual influence where both elements of the buildings and the lightning towers may be visible is illustrated by radiating dark blue lines. The areas where only the upper parts of the lightning towers may be visible above the surrounding vegetation is illustrated by pale blue radiating lines.

When the proposed ZVI is overlaid with the existing baseline ZVI for the existing AWE site buildings (as illustrated on Figure 13.12 in Appendix D of EA Volume II) it can be seen that the HEFF development would not increase the potential area of visibility of the AWE site. The buildings would sit below the level of the vegetation that contains the site. They would generally only be visible from within the AWE site and the immediate vicinity of boundaries of the site with the exception of the very elevated distant view points beyond Kingsclere to the south west. The upper parts of the lattice metal lightning towers have a more extensive ZVI, however this is well within the ZVI for the existing taller buildings and chimney stacks that already exist on the site. The lattice towers would be a much lighter form of construction than the existing site chimney stacks. Their visibility and influence would therefore be less extensive in reality than indicated by the ZVI. They would be difficult to see much beyond the 5km radius views whereas the existing chimneys can be perceived from elevated views 10 to 15km beyond the site in daylight, in good clear weather conditions.

13.7.2 Visual Impact Assessment

The summary of visual effects of the development during construction and for Operation Year 1 are illustrated on Figures 13.6 and 13.7 respectively. These plans are to be read in conjunction with the baseline Existing Visual Effects Figure 13.13 and the visual impact schedules in Appendix D of EA Volume II.

The following sections summarise the potential visual effects of the proposed development upon each visual receptor group and considers the potential night-time effects of lighting the site.

Views of the buildings within the application area and that of the wider site, are largely contained by the nature of the topography and intervening mature vegetation from many of the settlements, recreational paths, other public rights of way and transport corridors within the study area. The assessment of the visual effects of the proposed development upon all receptors relates to those effects likely to occur during the winter months for the worst affected receptors within any identified group i.e. the worst-case scenario. The effects have been assessed for the construction phase and the first year of operation, where the effects of planting mitigation have not been considered. The effects have also been considered at Year 10 of operation where appropriate, when the proposed mitigation planting would be assumed to have established a minimum height of 6m and this assessment is included in the visual impact schedules in Appendix D of EA Volume II.

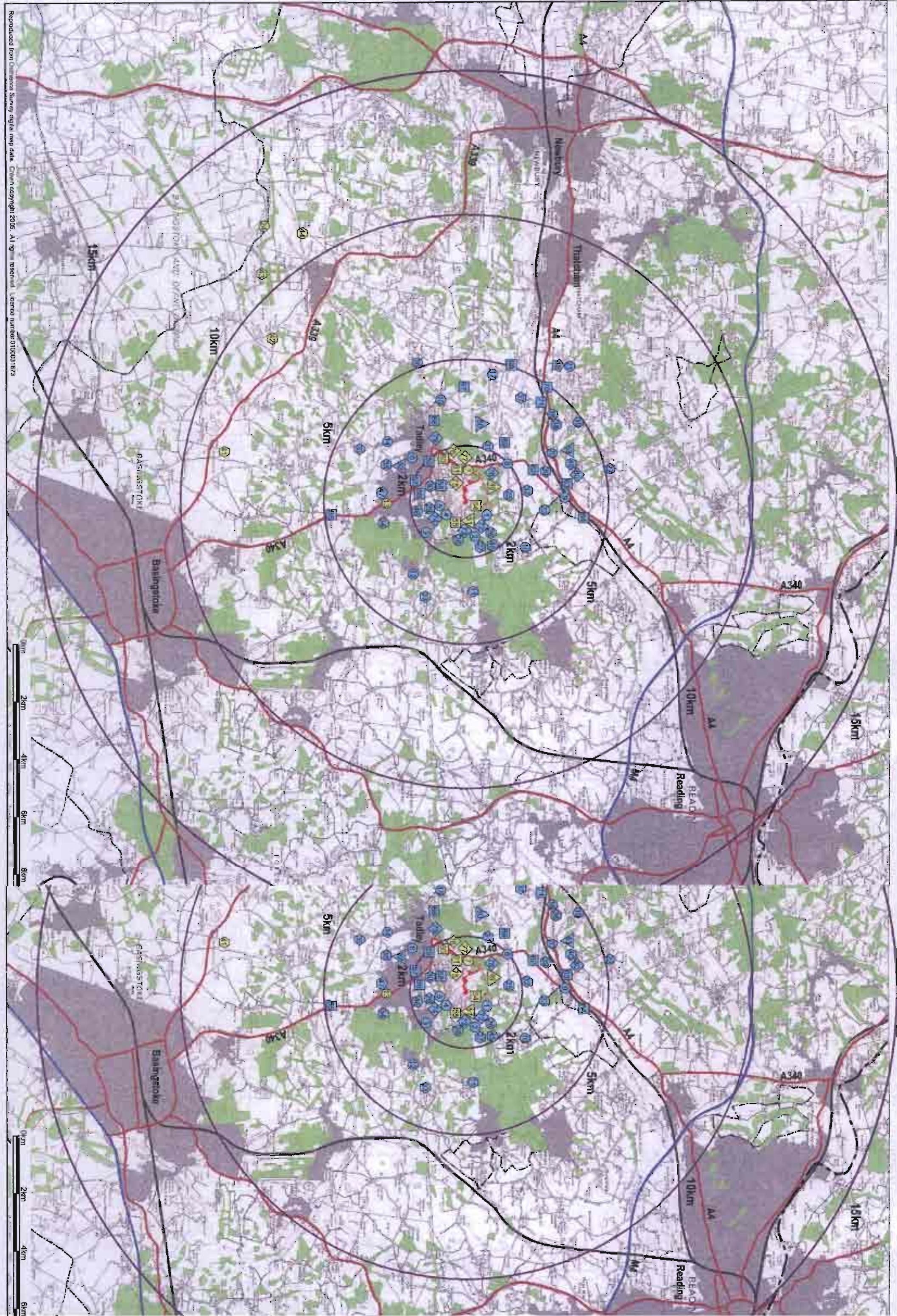
Settlements – Construction Visual Effects

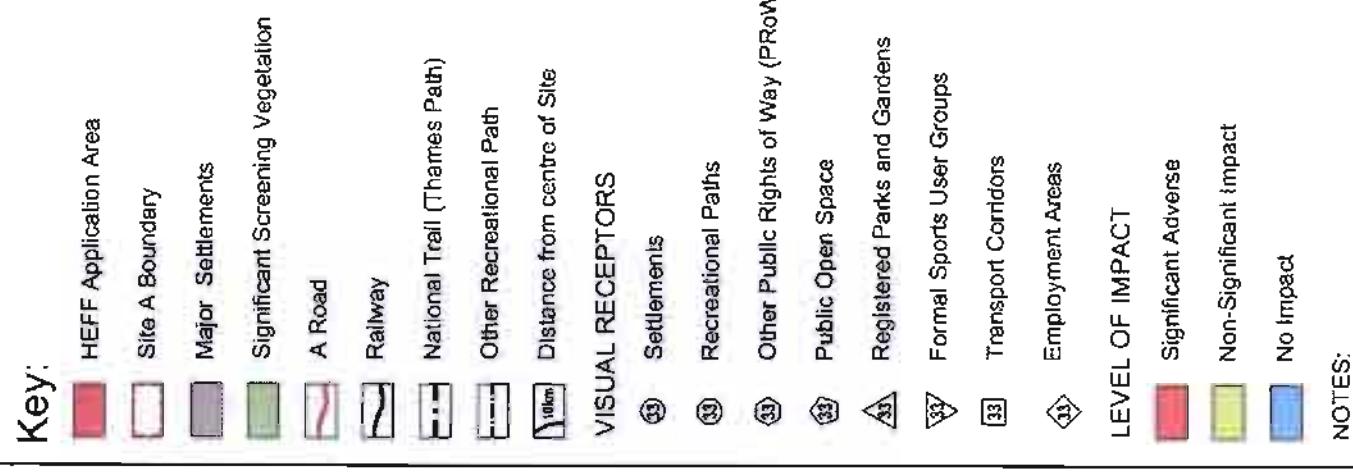
From Raghill (receptor no. 1), Old Warren (no. 2), Tadley Hill (no. 13), Broomhill (no. 20), Beenham (no. 22), Woolhampton (no. 18) and Upper Woolhampton (no. 19) the tallest elements of the existing buildings and/or chimney stacks can be seen above the tree line. It is feasible that the upper part of any tower crane used for the construction would also be visible seen in the context of the existing structures with a resultant temporary, negligible adverse visual effect.

One property (ref no. 7) The Old Kennels would have views of construction traffic using the access route with views south east from upper storey windows and east from the garden. The traffic would be seen in the context and backdrop of the existing site development and infrastructure (Appendix D of EA Volume II, Figure 13.18, view point 13). The effect would be a temporary minor adverse visual effect during construction only. There are no views of the proposed HEFF buildings or construction compounds from this property.

Settlements – Operational Visual Effects

From Raghill, Old Warren, Tadley Hill, Woolhampton and Upper Woolhampton, Broomhill and Beenham. There may be glimpsed views of the upper parts of the lightning towers above the tree line. These would be less intrusive in the views than the existing site chimney stacks (being shorter, narrower and of an open lattice metal construction) but would be perceived as additional vertical elements on the skyline on a clear day. This would result in a permanent negligible adverse visual effects.

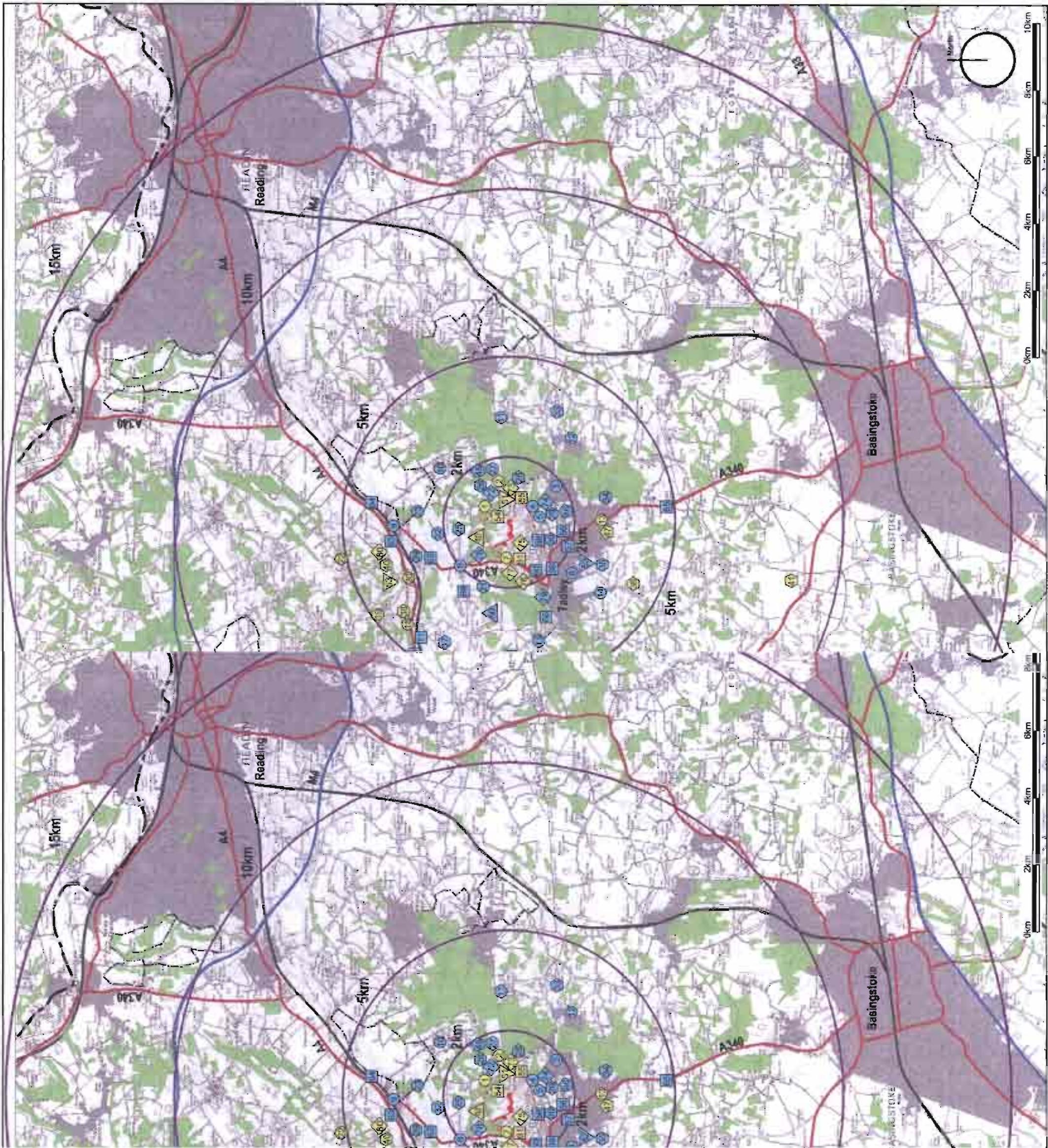


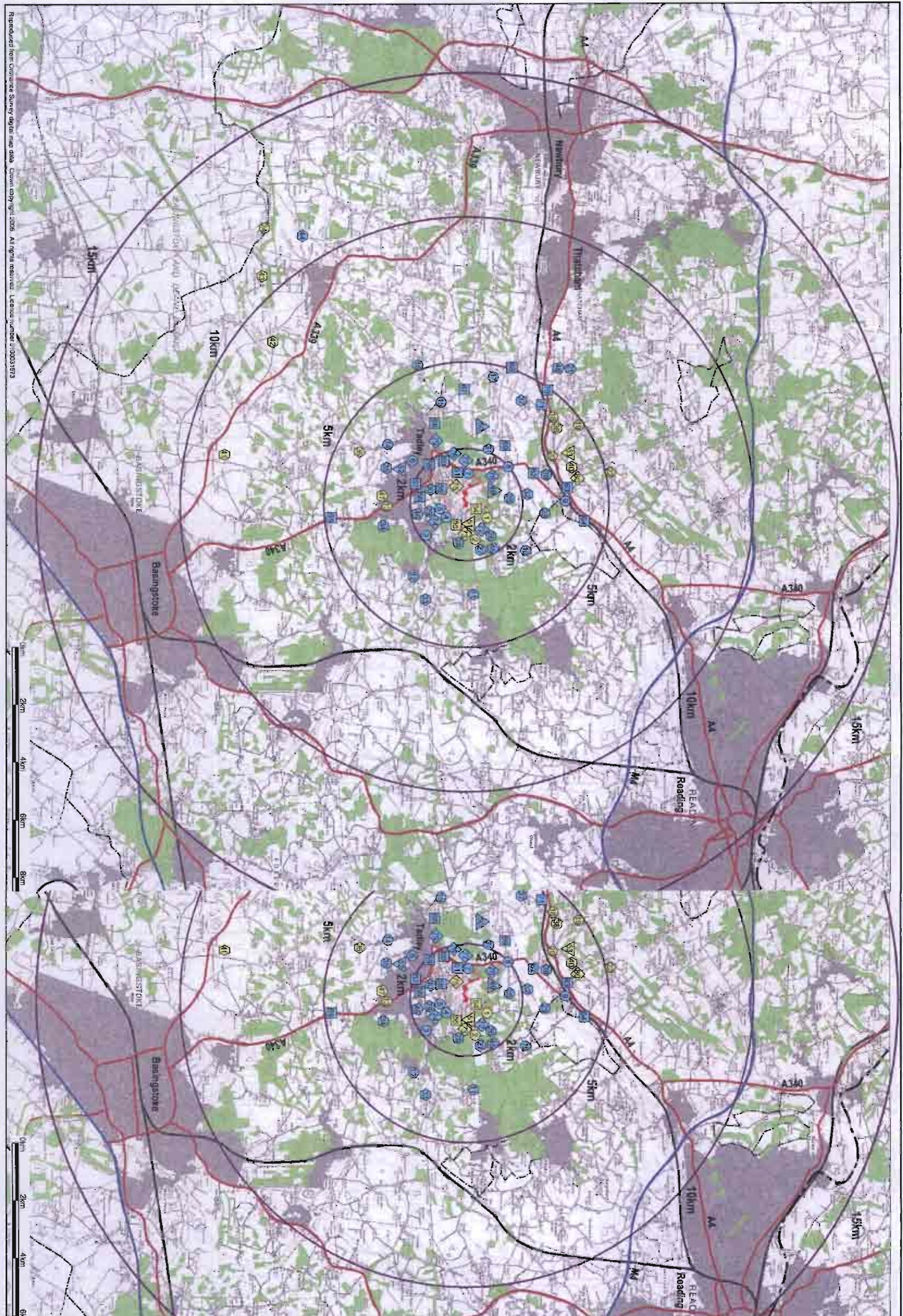


**Visual Effects Summary:
Construction**

Figure 13.6

Drawing No.





Registered Parks and Gardens	HEFF Environmental Appraisal Volume 1	HEFF Environmental Appraisal Volume 1	HEFF Environmental Appraisal Volume 1
Registered Parks and Gardens			
be minor adverse in Year 1 reducing to negligible in Year 10 and continuing to develop to neutral to slightly beneficial as the landscape structure planting matures			
There are very narrow existing views south to the construction site from the end of the avenue to the south wing of Aldermaston Court (receptor reference 49 refer to Appendix D of EA Volume II, Figure 13.8 local view points 11 and 12). The tallest of the existing AWE site buildings and chimneys are also glimpsed above the trees and intervening woodland. No views of the proposed HEFF buildings would be experienced due to intervening vegetation. Given the very narrow and filtered nature of the view, a temporary negligible visual impact would be experienced during the construction phase only.			
Formal Sports User Groups			
From Tadley Rugby Club (ref no. 51) and Wessex Downs Golf (ref no. 53) course 38, 39, 13.8, of the top of the lightening towers may be glimpsed above the intervening buildings and vegetation. These would however, be less intrusive than the existing site chimney stacks and as such only a negligible adverse visual impact would be experienced.			
Transport Corridors – Baseline Views			
Receptors using the local roads network would have a medium sensitivity to changes in the views and the views experienced from the roads would be dynamic (ie changing as the viewer travels by car, rides, walks or cycles). There are significant areas of planting on the road boundaries so views to the site are intermittent.			
Views of the application area are glimpsed from short sections of Red Lane (to the east of the site, Appendix D of EA Volume II, Figure 13.18 local view point 10) between existing vegetation, buildings and mounds.			
Transport Corridor Construction Visual Effects			
Construction traffic may be seen from the A340 Palces Hill (ref no. 61) as it runs parallel to the development access route leading to a temporary negligible visual effect.			
13.8.6 the In Option geny be of Rinst By Devi mea Applicable dev be applban impusal cont			
The construction compounds, tree removal and development construction site may be perceptible from Red Lane (ref no. 54) resulting in temporary minor adverse visual effects.			
Transport Corridors – Operational Effects			
From the Reading Road (ref no. 55) the upper parts of any tower crane would be visible above the intervening buildings and vegetation resulting in a temporary negligible adverse visual effect.			
From Red Lane narrow views of the proposed buildings would be experienced. These would be partially screening by the intervening buildings, mounds and vegetation. Similar narrow views of the lightening towers would also be gained. By Operational Year 10 the mitigation planting proposed and the existing young planting on the perimeter of the site would have established to form screening and landscape structure to the development. The resultant visual effects would			
Employment Sites			
These are considered to be low sensitivity receptors and non would experience significant visual effects. They are included in the Visual Impact Schedules in Appendix D of EA Volume II.			
13.8 Summary of Residual Impacts			
13.8.1 Landscape Effects			
The only significant (ie moderate and above) landscape effect identified by this assessment is the temporary moderate adverse landscape effect on the eastern sector of the AWE site – ref 10 Open Grassy Heath Plateau; a result of the removal of existing trees and the impact of both the temporary contractors compound and construction development site. Once the construction phase is completed this would reduce to a minor adverse effect. In Year 1, as the new industrial style buildings would sit within the large grassy heath plateau amongst the various other existing mounds and buildings and the contractors compound would be restored to grassland and planting. In time the proposed mitigation planting would establish and mature to provide an enhanced landscape structure and context to this sector of the AWE site. The residual effect would be neutral once the planting establishes in 10 years becoming slight beneficial in the longer term as the planting matures.			
13.8.2 Visual Effects			
In operational Year 1 the visual effect of the Proposed Development would generally be negligible for affected receptors with the exception of a short length of Red Lane (ref no. 54) where a minor adverse visual effect may be perceived.			
By Year 10 the residual visual effects of the operation of the Proposed Development taking into account the implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, would be negligible as set out in the Visual Impact Schedules in Appendix D of EA Volume II. This is generally as a result of the existing built development and existing vegetation which contain the proposed development application area. However, the vegetation containment would be reinforced and improved by the planting mitigation proposals which would also ensure a continuity of cover in the longer term.			
Transport Corridors – Operational Effects			
From Red Lane narrow views of the proposed buildings would be experienced. These would be partially screening by the intervening buildings, mounds and vegetation. Similar narrow views of the lightening towers would also be gained. By Operational Year 10 the mitigation planting proposed and the existing young planting on the perimeter of the site would have established to form screening and landscape structure to the development. The resultant visual effects would			

13.9 Statement of Effects

13.9.1 National Landscape Designations

AONB

The effects of the proposed HEFF development on the quality of views from several footpaths on the southern edge of the North Wessex Downs AONB to the north of the site and from elevated view points to the south west will be of negligible significance, where the proposed development would form a small part of the existing developed wooded ridgeline. The proposed development therefore meets the requirement of Policy C2 of the draft south east plan and of Policy DP3 set out in the 'North Wessex Downs Management Plan' (January 2004): "Retaining the quality of views from and to the North Wessex Downs" seeks "...to resist intrusive development within the main views from and to the AONB."

Registered Parks and Gardens

The development proposals are located outside of the areas identified as registered parks and gardens, as a result there will be no direct effects on either Wasing Park or Aldermaston Court. The boundary of the registered park and garden associated with Aldermaston Court immediately abuts the northern boundary to the eastern sector of the AWE site. It is separated from the HEFF application area by woodland and parkland vegetation and low rise buildings and mounds. There will be no adverse landscape impact on this site. There is a very narrow view from the southern avenue in the grounds of Aldermaston Court to the contractor's compound which may give rise to a temporary negligible adverse visual effect during the construction phase, there would however, be no long term visual effects. The proposed redevelopment would therefore accord with policy EN4 of the Berkshire Structure Plan and Policy ENV.35 of the West Berkshire Local Plan in relation to registered parks or gardens.

13.9.2 County Policy Context

This assessment has taken account of the various published National, County level and North Wessex Downs AONB landscape character assessments to inform the landscape assessment and design of mitigation for the project in accordance with Policy EN1 of the Berkshire Structure Plan and E6 of the Hampshire Structure Plan.

13.9.3 Local Policy Context

The landscape character methodology and approach has considered the local landscape character and detailed character assessments have been undertaken. The proposals seek to mitigate the landscape and visual impacts of the HEFF development. The protection of topsoil resources, proposed tree planting native structure planting and guidance with regard to the colour of the proposed buildings would reduce the visual impact and in the longer term provide an improved and more diverse landscape structure to this section of the site in keeping with the heathland woodland landscape character of the local area. The proposals would therefore accord with OVS.2, ENV.1 and ENV.5 of the West

Berkshire District Council Local Plan in conserving and enhancing the special features and diversity of the different landscape character areas found within West Berkshire and Policy E6 of the Basingstoke and Dean Borough Local Plan.

The proposals have no direct or indirect landscape effects on the character of any of the local conservation areas and would therefore accord the Policy ENV.33 of the West Berkshire Local Plan and Policy E3 of the Basingstoke and Dean Local Plan.

The proposed development would not have an impact on the designated Area of Special Landscape Importance as there is limited Intervisibility between the proposed development and the area and therefore accords with Policy ENV.3 of the West Berkshire Local Plan.

13.9.4 Effects on Landscape Resources

Topsoil would be stripped, stored and reused on the development site. Around 50 trees would be removed to make way for the development and access for construction. These would be replaced by significant areas of new tree and native shrub planting which would ultimately be beneficial to this part of the site as over mature birch stock is replaced by a mix of birch, pine and oak to provide an enhanced landscape structure in keeping with the healthy woodland character of the plateau, for the future.

Whilst there would be an initial slight adverse impact on the tree stock this would ultimately be more than replaced by an improved tree structure leading to a slight beneficial impact in the longer term.

13.10 Conclusions

The Proposed Development would sit within the eastern sector of the AWE site which at one time would have comprised part of the parkland and hinterland to Aldermaston Court but which has subsequently been developed for airfield and military uses and is now part of AWE at Aldermaston. Whilst less densely developed than the western sector, it is still substantially modified by the existing mounds, buildings, roads and other site infrastructure which are scattered throughout. The area of the Open Grassy Heath Plateau character area within which the development would sit, has an ordinary landscape quality, medium value and moderate sensitivity to change.

The residual landscape impacts of the proposed development on this landscape area once the planting proposals are established, would be **neutral** improving to **slight beneficial** in the longer term when the planting matures. The remaining residual landscape effects on adjacent site character areas would be negligible due to the extensive existing containment provided by local vegetation, and built development.

The proposals would not extend the existing Zone of Visual Influence of the AWE site and by Year 10 the residual visual effects would be **negligible**.

The proposed planting would provide long term continuity of the containment afforded by the site vegetation cover.

Berkshire District Council Local Plan in conserving and enhancing the special features and diversity of the different landscape character areas found within West Berkshire and Policy E6 of the Basingstoke and Dean Borough Local Plan.

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the North Wessex Downs AONB to the north, the site is set within the existing night-time glow related to Tadley.	Ref. 13-9 ctor date	the North Wessex Downs AONB to the north, the site is set within the existing night-time glow related to Tadley.	Ref. 13-7 Berkshire Joint Strategic Planning Unit: <i>Berkshire Structure Plan 2001-2016</i> (Adopted 2005)
The development proposals, as set out on the SDCP, will increase the number of lights within the site, such as lighting to the buildings, new internal security fencing and car park areas, which will be evident from those receptors immediately bounding the site. However, considering the implementation of mitigation measures to reduce night glare, such as restricting up lighting of buildings, installing hooded and directional lighting columns and implementing the landscape proposals, the effects on the night sky will be limited.	Ref. 13-10 arity ocal Ref. 13-9 of date	The development proposals, as set out on the SDCP, will increase the number of lights within the site, such as lighting to the buildings, new internal security fencing and car park areas, which will be evident from those receptors immediately bounding the site. However, considering the implementation of mitigation measures to reduce night glare, such as restricting up lighting of buildings, installing hooded and directional lighting columns and implementing the landscape proposals, the effects on the night sky will be limited.	Ref. 13-8 Hampshire County Council: <i>Hampshire Structure Plan Review 1996 – 2011</i> (Adopted 2000)
			Ref. 13-9 West Berkshire District Council: <i>West Berkshire Local Plan</i> (Adopted 14 June 2002)
			Ref. 13-10 Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council Local Plans: 1996-2011 (Adopted 2006)
			Ref. 13-11 English Heritage: <i>The Register of Parks and Gardens</i>
The Proposed Facility will not be visible from any of the other external schemes and consequently no landscape or visual cumulative impacts have been identified.	Ref. 13-12 the Country Volume 7 - South-East and London	The Proposed Facility will not be visible from any of the other external schemes and consequently no landscape or visual cumulative impacts have been identified.	Ref. 13-12 The Countryside Agency (1998); <i>Countryside Character- Landscape – A Strategy for the Future</i>
			Ref. 13-13 Berkshire County Council (November 2003): <i>Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment</i>
			Ref. 13-14 Hampshire County Council (June 1993); <i>The Hampshire Landscape – A Strategy for the Future</i>
			Ref. 13-15 Newbury (West Berkshire) District Council (1993); <i>Landscape Character Assessment</i>
			Ref. 13-16 Basingstoke and Deane District Council (2001); <i>Landscape Character Assessment</i> (2001)
			Ref. 13-17 Countryside Agency (April 2002); <i>North Wessex Downs Landscape</i>
			Ref. 13-18 Atkins Nuclear (September 2005); <i>Environmental Site Setting Exercise Volume 1</i>
			Ref. 13-19 RPS (June 2005); <i>Vegetation Appraisal</i>
			Ref. 13-20 Institute of Lighting Engineers' <i>'Lighting in the Countryside – Towards Good Practice</i> (1996)
			Ref. 13-21 RPS (October 2006); <i>Landscape Strategy</i>
			Ref. 13-3 AWE (November 2005); <i>Site Development Context Plan</i>
			Ref. 13-4 Atkins (Final Draft Report – December 2005); <i>AWE Aldermaston, Burghfield and Blacknest – Historic Characterisation and Management Strategy</i>
			Ref. 13-5 West Berkshire Council (2006); <i>Draft Historic Landscape Characterisation: Aldermaston Parish</i>
			Ref. 13-6 The North Wessex Downs Council of Partners (January 2004); <i>North Wessex Downs Management Plan</i>

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