

Land at Chardstock, Axminster Landscape Visual Baseline

Undertaken by Clifton Emery design Ltd
March 2025

Report number	Status	Date	Revision	Author / checked
240614 R 04 01	Preliminary	March 2025	A	LC / DH / DCC

Introduction & Methodology note

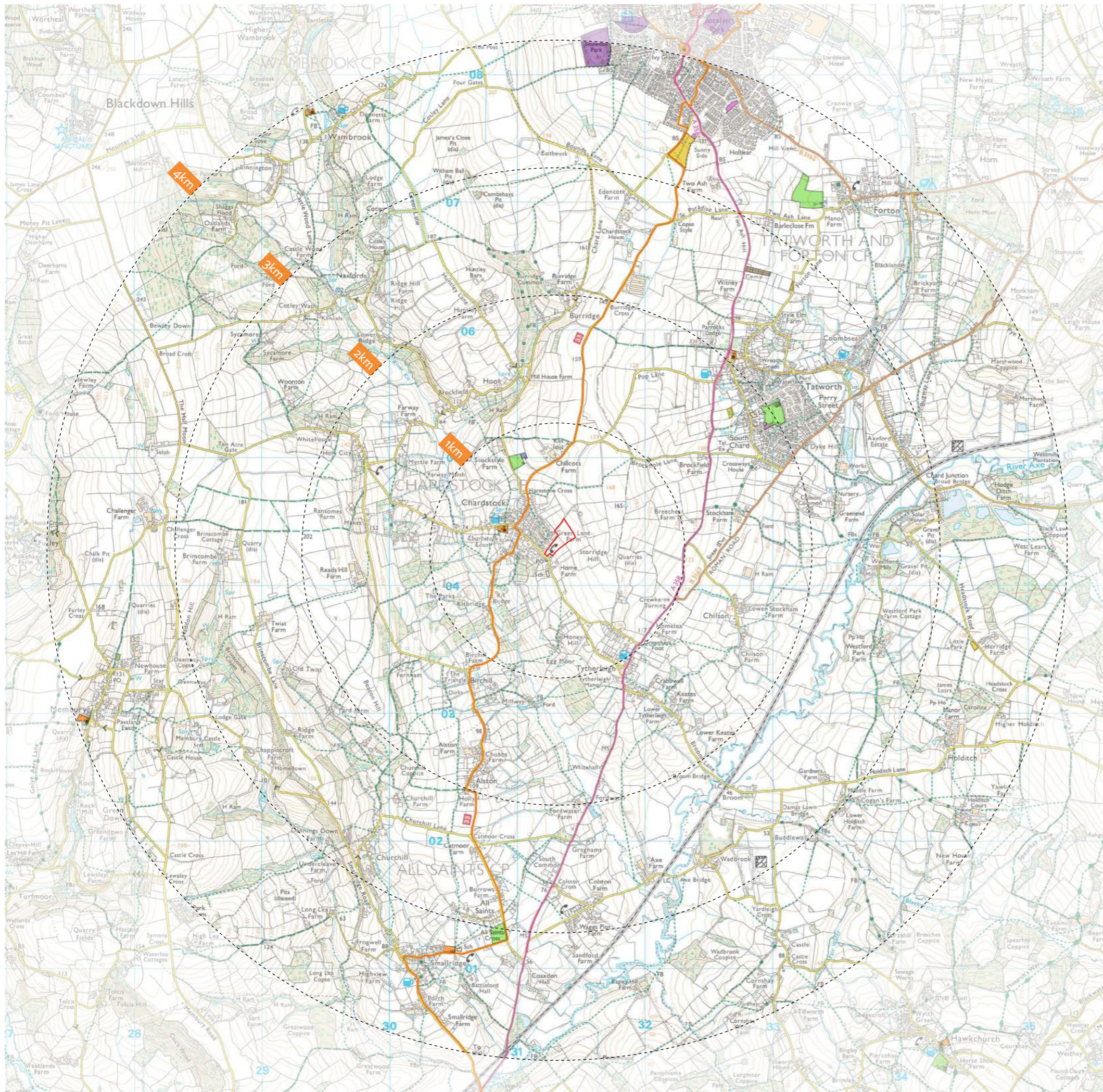
This Landscape Visual Baseline has been undertaken by Clifton Emery Design as part of an iterative design process, to accompany a Reg 19 Local Plan submission.

The assessment approach is based on published guidance set out in the Third Edition of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3) published jointly by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment in April 2013. It also draws on subsequent publications such as 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment' from Natural England (2014), and has been refined and developed over a number of years to reflect emerging best practice, and tested through the planning appeal process.

This report has been prepared by Clifton Emery design in collaboration with Tapestry, a landscape architecture practice registered with the Landscape Institute and experienced in preparing landscape and visual impact assessments. The assessment has been undertaken by or under the guidance of a suitably qualified and experienced Landscape Architect. Guidance emphasises the responsibility of the landscape professional carrying out the assessment to ensure that the approach and methodology is appropriate for the particular development to be assessed.

The level of detail in this assessment is considered appropriate and proportional to reasonably assess the likely landscape and visual effects that will arise from the development proposed. The information contained within this report will, when reviewed alongside documents detailing the proposed development, form the basis for the identification and description of the changes that will result from the development.

A detailed LVIA methodology can be provided upon request.



Site Context Plan

1.1 Site location

1.1.1 The application site is located on the south east extents of the village of Chardstock, Devon - which is approximately 4 miles south east town Chard, a medium sized town located within south Somerset. The village is situated close to the A358 can be used to access the local towns of Chard and Axminster, with wider connections to the city of Exeter.

1.1.2 The entirety of the site area sits within East Devon district Council, which acts as the areas Local Planning Authority (LPA.)

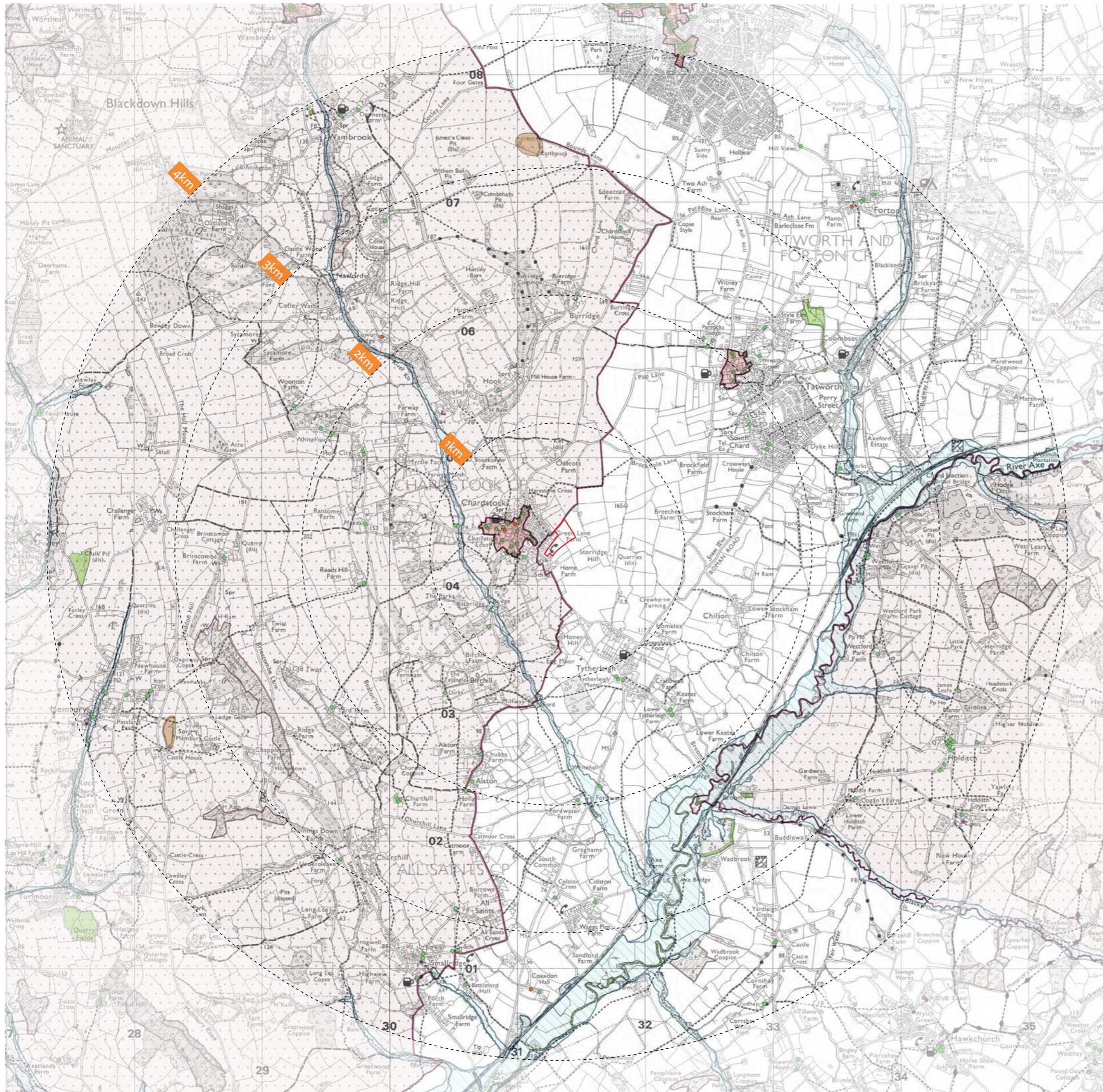
1.2 Highways and access

1.2.1 The site has two points of existing access - the primary off The Half Moon road located on the south east boundary, with the second off a private farm access on the northern boundary. The Half Moon Road connects the village of Chardstock to the wider A358.

- Site boundary
- - - Public Rights of Way (PROWs)
- - - Bridleways
- National Cycle Route (No. 33)

- Ordnance Survey Open Green Spaces (2022)
- Allotments or Community Growing Facility
- Bowling Green
- Cemetery
- Other Sports Facilities
- Play Space
- Playing Field
- Public Park or Garden
- Religious Grounds
- Tennis Court





Landscape Planning Designations

1.3 Planning context

- 1.3.1 Part of the site has been identified within the Reg 19 Consultation (Ref: Char_o4a).
- 1.3.2 East Devon District Council is currently preparing a new Local Plan. The new plan is proposed to cover the period from 2020 to 2040.
- 1.3.3 The Draft East Devon Local Plan 2020 to 2040 (autumn 2022) includes the following spatial strategy:

“1. Strategic Policy – Spatial Strategy












New development will be directed towards the most sustainable locations in East Devon, consistent with the spatial strategy to:

“Focus new development on the western side of the district, including a new town and other major strategic developments close to Exeter.

Promote significant development at the Principal Centre of Exmouth and the Main Centres of Axminster, Honiton, Ottery St Mary, Seaton, and Sidmouth, to serve their own needs and that of the wider surrounding areas.

Support development at the Local Centres of Broadclyst, Budleigh Salterton, Colyton, Lymstone, and Woodbury that meets local needs and those in the immediate surroundings.

Allow limited development to meet local needs at the Service Villages of Beer, Branscombe, Broadhembury, Chardstock, Cyst St Mary, Duneswell, East Budleigh, Exton, Feniton, Hawkchurch, Kilmington, Musbury, Newton Popleford, Otterton, Payhembury, Plymtree, Sidbury, Stoke Canon, Tipton St John, Uplyme, Westclyst, West Hill and Whimble”.(p.13)

-  Site boundary
-  National Landscape (Blackdown Hills / Dorset)
-  Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
-  Local Conservation Areas
-  Scheduled Monument
-  Registered Park and Garden (Historic England)
- Listed buildings
 -  Grade I
 -  Grade II
 -  Grade II *
- Additional environmental designations
 -  Ancient Woodland (Natural England)
 -  Flood Zone 2 (Environment Agency)

Chardstock is within the River Axe SAC (Policy PBO4), but there are no other landscape designations within the site.



Part 1: Landscape Baseline

1.5 Landscape designations

1.5.1 A number of relevant planning designations have been reviewed as part of the baseline assessment. These include Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas, and Sites of Special Scientific Interest and other relevant Local Landscape Planning Designations. The key designations are outlined below

1.5.2 The site does not sit within any landscape designations.

1.5.3 Conservation Area

1.5.4 The site does not sit within any historic conservation areas. The nearest area of historic importance is Chardstock Local Conservation Area approximately 200m north west of the site.

1.5.5 Listed buildings & Schedules Monuments

1.5.6 There are no listed buildings or structures within the site.

1.5.7 Due to the site's close proximity to the village conservation area there are several listed buildings, within 0.5km of the site.

1.5.8 There are no Scheduled Monuments within the site. The nearest Scheduled Monuments are over 3km away

1.5.9 National Landscape Classification

1.5.10 The site does not fall within a National Landscape

1.5.11 Chardstock is surrounded by National Landscapes (formerly known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, AONBs). The Blackdown Hills National Landscape abuts the site to the north and west, with Dorset National Landscape residing approximately 2.5km to the east.

1.5.12 Tree Preservation Orders

1.5.13 There are no known Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) on the site or within close proximity to the site.

1.5.14 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

1.5.15 There are no SSSI's within 2km of the site.

1.5.16 Stowell Meadow is the nearest SSSI, which lies approximately 2.5km to the east..

1.5.17 Nature Reserves and other areas of note

1.5.18 The site does not fall within any local or national nature reserves, and there are not any nature reserves within 4km of the site

1.6 Landscape Character

1.6.1 The site lies within the **Blackdowns National Character Area (NCA) - 147**.

The Blackdowns Character Area comprises of: “Long, dark ridges, deep valleys and dynamic cliffs are the essence of the Blackdowns National Character Area (NCA). The ridges create prominent backdrops from afar and offer far-reaching views. Flat plateaux, large, regular fields and long, straight roads create a sense of openness and uniformity on the ridges. Beech hedgerows and avenues enclose the grazed landscape, although areas of remnant common, lowland heath and scrub still exist, providing open access.

Woodland, much of semi-natural origin, dominates the steep valley tops, creating sinuous dark edges to the ridges; some conifer plantations also exist and intrude onto the plateaux. Below the wooded edge pastoral valleys feature with a medieval field pattern of small, irregular fields bounded by dense species-rich hedgerows and hedgerow trees, creating an enclosed, tranquil setting. A myriad of springs and streams flow south through the valleys and can often be traced by semi-natural habitats: springline mires, rush pasture and carr woodland much wider flood plain. (Natural England, 2014). Carr woodland is another term for wet woodland, which is often low-canopied, with willow and alder growing over a bulky ground layer of plants such as royal fern, yellow flag and meadowsweet.

1.6.2 The site also sits within the **Axe Valley Devon Character Area** and is within the **Upper Farmed and Wooded Valley Slopes** Devon Landscape Character Type.

1.6.3 The overall strategy for the Axe Valley Character Area is area is:

“To protect the landscape’s watery and open character, historic settlements and pastoral valley sides and its important picturesque qualities. Opportunities to manage and extend areas of water meadow and distinctive features such as traditional orchards are sought. Views to church towers are retained along with the historic character and form of the villages; with any new development or infrastructure carefully sited and sensitively integrated.”

1.6.4

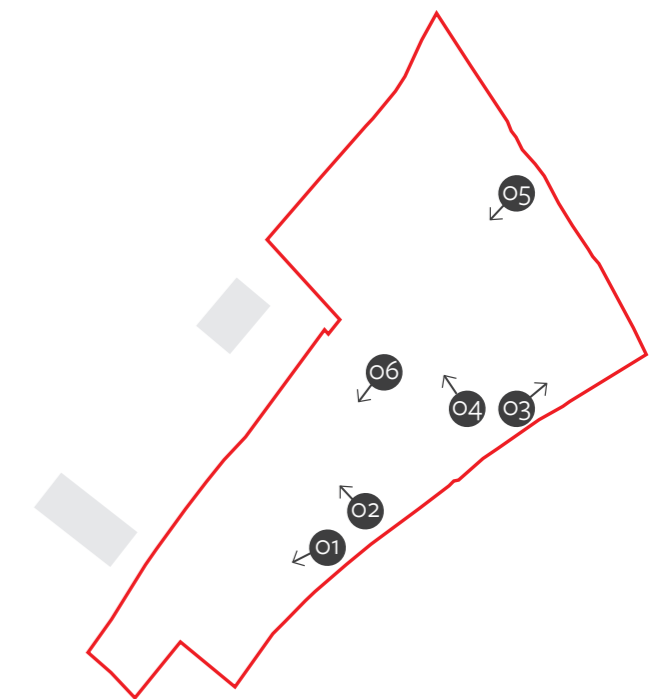
1.6.5 The Upper Farmed and Wooded Valley Slopes character type is described as:

- Undulating or rolling upper valley slopes
- Pastoral farmland, with a wooded appearance, and arable cultivation on lower slopes
- Small to medium size fields with irregular boundaries
- Deciduous woods and copses, especially on hilltops and upper slopes
- Very wide, usually low, species-rich hedges with many hedgerow trees
- Dispersed settlement pattern of isolated farms and small villages
- Very winding narrow lanes
- An intimate and intricate landscape with wider views often restricted by vegetation
- Frequently remote and tranquil with little modern development

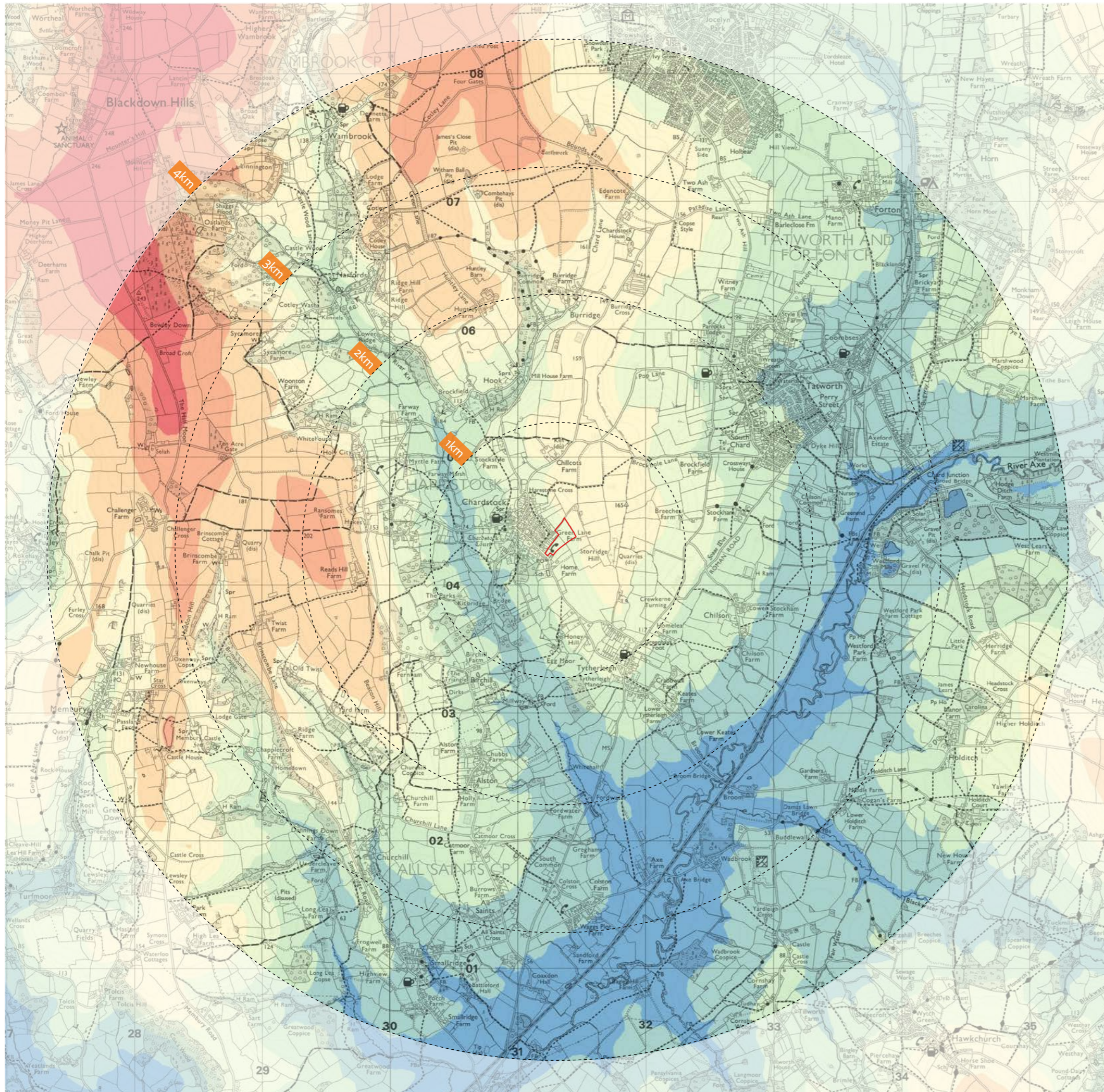
Part 1: Landscape Baseline

1.7 Site Landscape Character

- 1.7.1 The site is made up of 2.59ha of agricultural land. Ecological site surveys are yet to be undertaken. High level analysis of the site would suggest it is likely to be predominantly improved grassland habitat.
- 1.7.2 The site is currently laid to pasture but appears not to be actively used or cultivated, and recent uses of the site are unknown. The site does not appear to have been in recent use for agricultural purposes and there is no known public access to the site area.
- 1.7.3 The site is bound by existing mature hedgerows on all side, with an additional boundary hedgerow separating the two fields that make up the full extent of the site.
- 1.7.4 There are no existing trees within the site, with the only aspects of tree planting localised to small clusters of scrub within the northern boundary hedgerow. There is a row of conifer trees situated on the southern boundary, separating the site from adjacent neighbours.



Above: Photo location plan



Topography

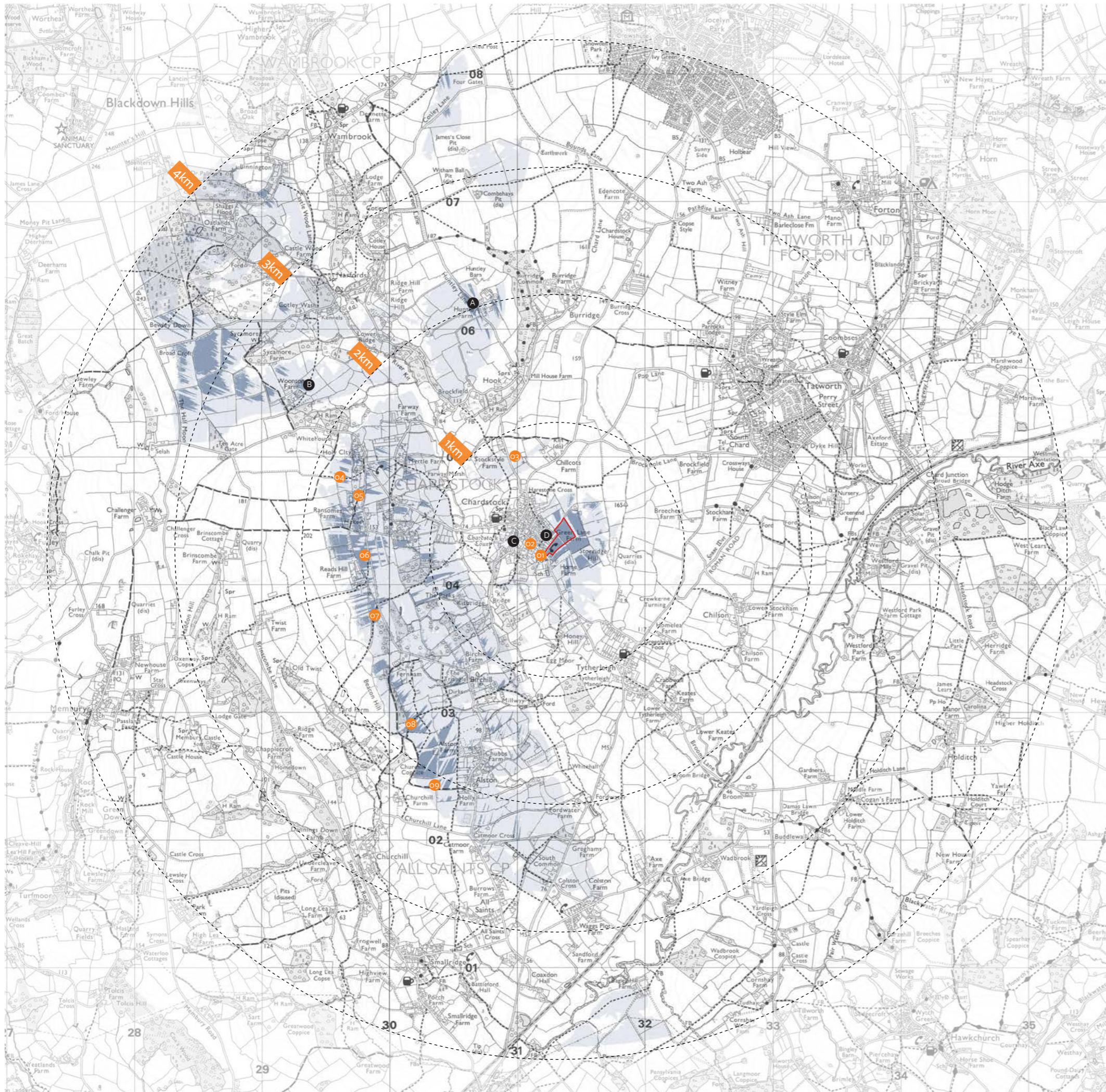
1.8 Topography

1.8.1 The slight slopes gradually to the east at an average gradient of 1:14, with an eventual high point of 140m AOD in the north east corner, and a low points of 120mAOD in the south east at the site entrance.

1.8.2 Within the wider landscape, the site sits on the edge of the south east edge of Chardstock with a surrounding plateaux of 110m - 140m . The elevation of the surrounding land ascends to height of 220m AOD and above in the north west as the surrounding land joins the Blackdown Hills National Landscape.

- Site boundary
- Above 220m
- 190m to 220m
- 160m to 190m
- 140m to 160m
- 110m to 140m
- 80m to 110m
- 50m to 80m
- Less than 50m





Zone of Theoretical Visibility

- Site boundary
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility DTM data
Potential visibility based on DTM data, which uses 5m "bare earth" OS contour data, which does not take into account screening by vegetation or existing built form. The true visual envelope of the site will be established through in-field analysis.
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility DSM data
Potential visibility based on DSM data, which uses 1m National LiDAR Programme data (Composite, First Return, 2022), provided by DEFRA (Open Government Licence v3.0).

LiDAR - stands for Light Detection and Ranging, and uses light pulses to capture natural and built features on the earth's surface.

This projection takes into account potential visibility based on existing vegetation and built form as captured by the 2022 DSM LiDAR data. The true visual envelope of the site will be tested through in-field analysis, and illustrated by representative viewpoint photographs.

The roof ridge height was set at 8.5m above ground level for the assessment.

- A Viewpoint visited and recorded but no views of the site were observed
- 01 Representative viewpoints



Part 2: Visual Baseline

1.9 Visibility appraisal scope

1.9.1 Introduction

1.9.2 The diagram overleaf illustrates the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV), which has been used to identify the landscape that will potentially be effected by the development.

1.9.3 Principal Representative Viewpoints (RVPs) provide typical views towards the site from public areas. A desktop study was undertaken of the topography of the study area within 4km.

1.9.4 Definition of the Study Area

1.9.5 A desktop study is used to establish a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) which is the area from which the development is theoretically visible. The ZTV is then tested during field visits, when a number of identified key representative viewpoints are photographed and the visual impact of the scheme assessed. Based on the local topography and the scale of the proposed development, a ZTV of 4km radius around the site has been identified as being a suitable study area for the visual assessment of the proposed development.

1.9.6 Following the establishment of the baseline conditions, the appraisal will set out the proposed development characteristics, and the likely visual and landscape effects that will result. The impact of these effects will then be assessed, and the report will conclude with recommendations on how any potential negative impacts could be mitigated through the use of deliverable design measures.

1.10 Photographic study

1.10.1 The following section provides a series of representative viewpoints, providing commentary on the composition of the view and likely visibility of the site and offers potential mitigation, where necessary.

1.10.2 Photographs for the visual appraisal were taken using a Nikon D3300 DSLR camera at a focal length equivalent to 50mm on a conventional 35mm camera, in order to create the view, which is generally accepted as being closest to that seen by the human eye.

1.10.3 The study provides a photographic record of the visual amenity of the site from the surrounding landscape.

1.10.4 The photographs were taken in one day on Wednesday 12th March 2025

1.10.5 Weather conditions were clear, with very light cloud cover and good visibility for highlighted locations.

1.10.6 Photographs taken are representative of views with the naked eye. Any zoomed or wide angle, multi-photo images and panoramic views have been identified.

1.10.7 No access was gained to private or residential ownerships surrounding the site.

1.10.8 Where the site is glimpsed, the indicative field parcel has been highlighted in orange.

1.10.9 The photographs used are intended to be illustrative, giving an indication of the views discussed and are not meant to replace the experience of visiting the viewpoint in person.

1.11 Notes on representative views:

1.11.1 Viewpoints are limited due to the following factors:

- Proximity to, and location of the existing settlement to the north.
- The broader topography, and intermittent existing vegetation screening many potential views from public roads and rights of way.

1.12 Summary of initial viewpoint findings

1.12.1 Due to surrounding development, existing vegetation, and existing vegetation, views in close proximity to the site were limited.

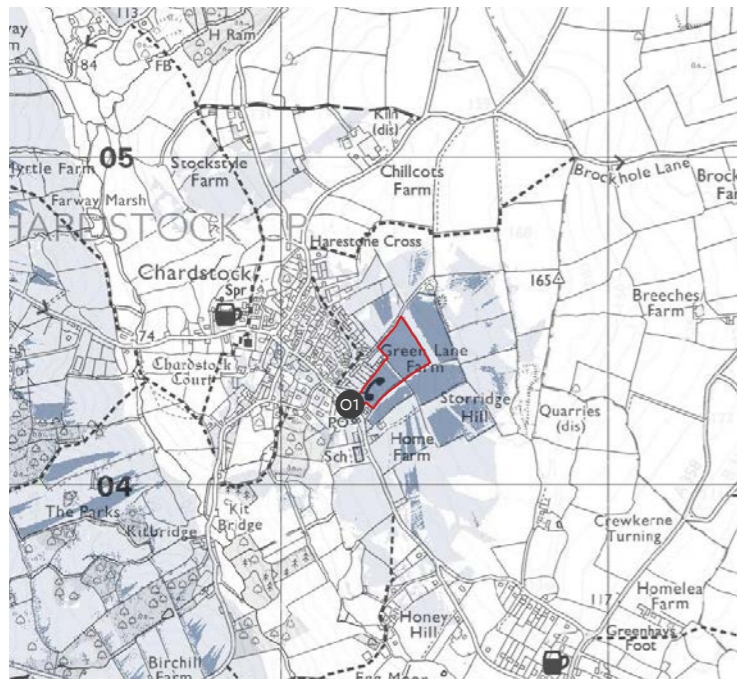
1.12.2 The site can be glimpsed from local elevated land approaching 1.5km to the east - with primarily the eastern field parcel visible to its elevated position

1.12.3 Within 2km of the site to the west, there are views onto the site from viewpoints of medium to high sensitivity - due to their location within the Blackdown Hills National Landscape.

Part 2: Visual Baseline



RVP 01	View from 'The Half Moon Road' adjacent to site entrance	Grid reference: ST 31212 04239	Distance to site: 13m	No. of panorama photographs: 03 @65%
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RVP 01: View from 'The Half Moon Road' adjacent to site entrance

Height: 120m AOD

Receptors: Local residents / motorists

The photograph has been taken from 'The Half Moon Road' that provides access to the site in the south west. Views are achieved through the existing site entrance, with periphery views obscured by mature existing hedgerow on the site boundary

Mitigation considerations:

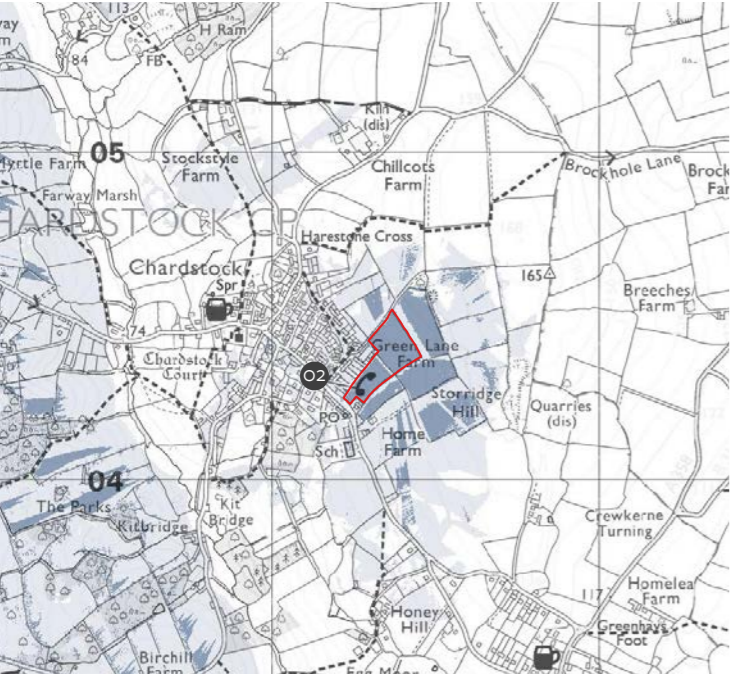
- Planting to soften views of new housing.
- Enhancement of existing boundary hedgerow.

- Early Phase planting to bolster hedgerow before construction phase.
- Potential design considerations for entrance green and open space to provide a green setback to development

Part 2: Visual Baseline



RVP 02 View east towards site from 'The Half Moon Road' Grid reference: ST 31127 04315 Distance to site: 114m No. of panorama photographs: 01 @105%



RVP 02: View east from 'The Half Moon Road' towards the site

Height: 119m AOD

Receptors: Motorists/Pedestrians

There are no views of the site due to existing boundary treatments, dwellings and vegetation screening views of the site in its entirety.

Mitigation considerations:

- No mitigation required

Part 2: Visual Baseline



RVP 03	View south east from Chardstock Cricket Club	Grid reference: ST 30972 05006	Distance to site: 750m	No. of panorama photographs: 05 @70%
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RVP 03: View south east from Chardstock Cricket Club
Height: 134m AOD
Receptors: Members of public

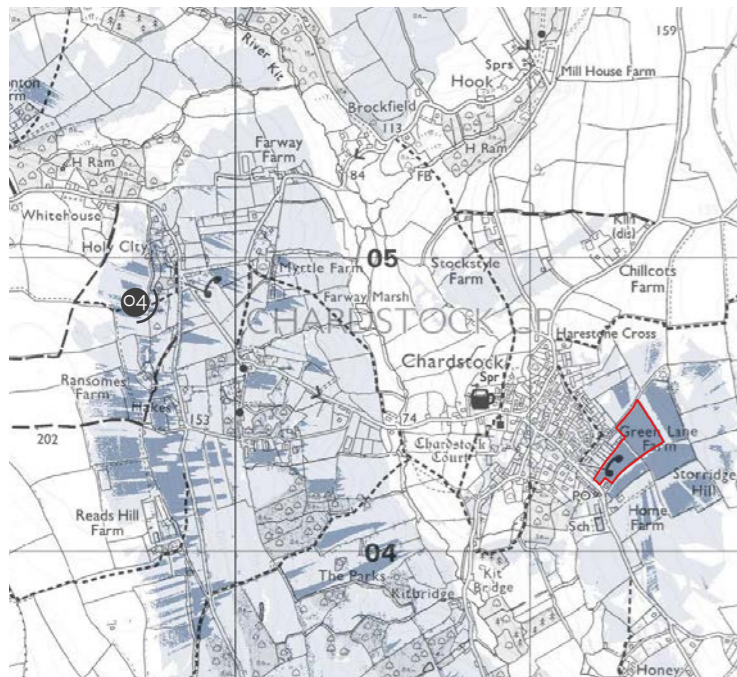
The site is not visible due to intervening topographical elements, existing dwellings and existing vegetation.

- Mitigation considerations:*
- Additional planting to bolster screening already in place

Part 2: Visual Baseline



RVP 04	View east from Public Right of Way - Chardstock FP20	Grid reference: ST 129665 04845	Distance to site: 1.73km	No. of panorama photographs: 04 @60%
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RVP 04: View east from Public Right of Way - Chardstock FP20

Height: 181m AOD

Receptors: Members of public

The photograph has been taken from an existing PRoW within an agricultural field, with distant views looking east towards the site.

The foreground consists of multiple layers of vegetation with prominent existing tree species, which helps to mitigate views of the site.

The village of Chardstock is visible in the foreground with the proposed site being viewed within the context of existing built form

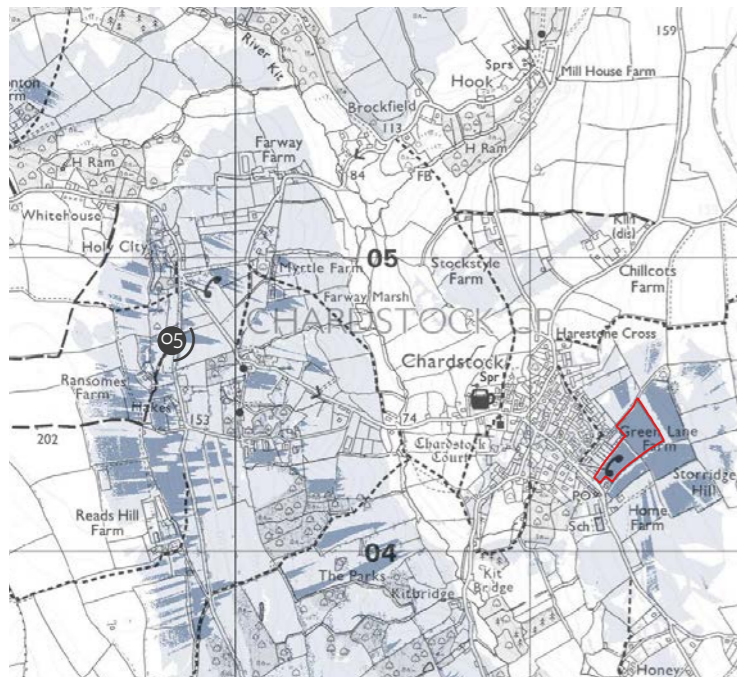
Mitigation considerations:

- Proposed tree planting included within north south landscape breaks
- Enhancement of existing boundary vegetation with native tree and shrub species
- Early Phase planting to enhance existing boundaries and prominent green infrastructure breaks

Part 2: Visual Baseline



RVP 05	View east from public Bridleway 22	Grid reference: ST 29805 04752	Distance to site: 1.5km	No. of panorama photographs: 04 @65%
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RVP 04: View east from public Bridleway 22

Height: 157m AOD

Receptors: Public using bridleway

The view has been taken from an existing Bridleway looking east towards the site from the Blackdown Hills National Landscape.

The viewpoint shows minimal distant views of the site, with only glimpse views available of the eastern extents.

Existing hedgerow can be seen within the foreground of the viewpoint, which has been maintained to a low level as part of the agricultural maintenance, which allows views to the site. This low hedgerow will only remain for small amounts of the years, once grown the view will likely be removed.

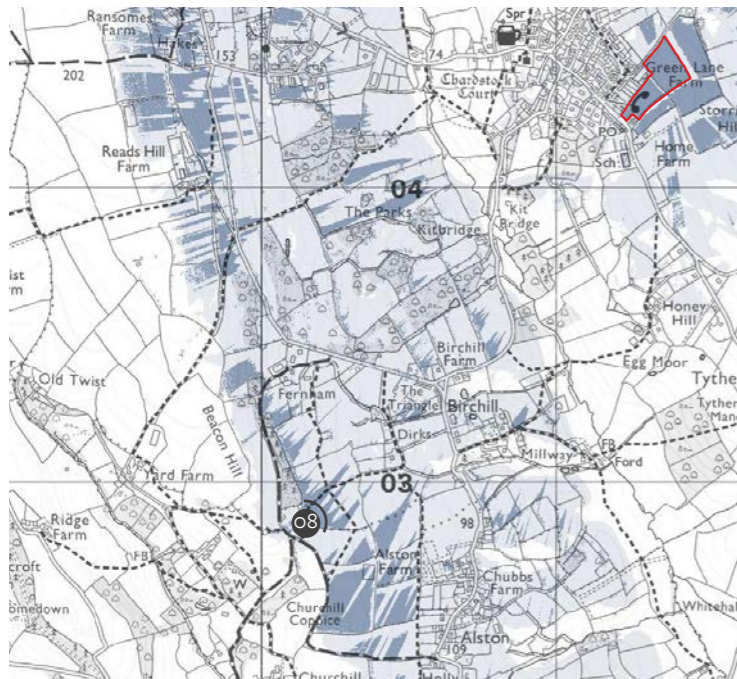
Mitigation considerations:

- *Proposed structural tree planting included within north south landscape breaks*
- *Enhancement of existing boundary vegetation with native tree and shrub species*
- *Additional vegetation and open space added to the eastern areas of the site to provide a landscape backdrop to development*
- *Early Phase planting, to enhance existing boundaries and prominent green infrastructure breaks*

Part 2: Visual Baseline



RVP o8	View north east from Public Right of Way FP40	Grid reference: ST 30144 02860	Distance to site: 1.74km	No. of panorama photographs: 03 @75%
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RVP o8: View north east from Pubic Right of Way FP40

Height: 148m AOD

Receptors: Members of public

Photo taken from FP40 in existing agricultural pasture land. Existing tree belts can be seen within the foreground of the viewpoint, with the village of chardstock and wider landscape prominent within the background. Open views of site achievable.

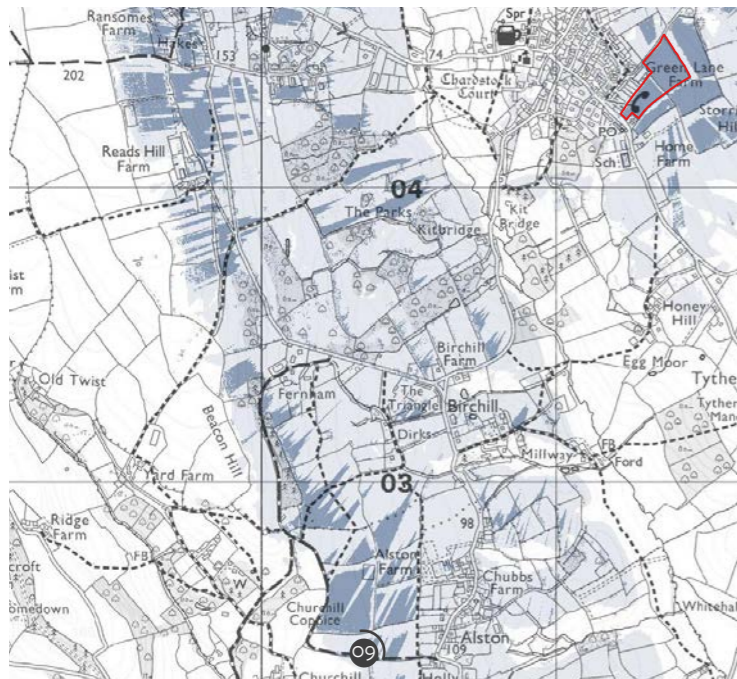
Mitigation considerations:

- Proposed structural tree planting included within north south landscape breaks
- Enhancement of existing boundary vegetation and central corridor with native tree and shrub species
- Early Phase planting, to enhance existing boundaries and prominent green infrastructure breaks
- Any suggested development within the eastern field will be classed as negligible in the context of the proposed Char_04a allocation
- Additional vegetation and open space added to the eastern areas of the site to provide a landscape backdrop to development

Part 2: Visual Baseline



RVP 09	View north east from Bridleway 38	Grid reference: ST 30341 02413	Distance to site: 2km	No. of panorama photographs: 03 @70%
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RVP 09: View north east from Bridleway 38

Height: 130m AOD

Receptors: Members of public/users of
bridleway

The photo has been taken from a public
bridleway within an agricultural field,
currently laid to pasture. The eastern extents
of the site are partially visible due to the
elevation in topography. Existing mature tree
cover can be seen within the foreground
and midpoint of the view, assisting in visually
mitigating large areas of the site.

Mitigation considerations:

- *Enhancement to central existing hedgerow corridor to ensure excess height and canopy cover can be achieved from tree planting.*
- *Additional planting on a north south orientation throughout the development to help establish a layered approach to landscape mitigation.*
- *Any suggested development within the eastern field will be classed as negligible in the context of the proposed Char_04a allocation*
- *Additional vegetation and open space added to the eastern areas of the site to provide a landscape backdrop to development*

Part 3: Scheme Description

Key

- Site boundary
- Site under applicant control
- Existing buildings
- Neighbouring facilities
- Proposed trees
- ① Access to the site
- ② Entrance space
- ③ Public Open Space
- ④ Proposed main access route
- ⑤ Green breaks
- ⑥ Strategic landscape area
- ⑦ Enhancement of existing boundary vegetation with native tree and shrub species and early Phase planting, to enhance existing boundaries and prominent green infrastructure breaks
- ⑧ Strategic tree planting
- ② Higher density development blocks
- ⑨ Lower density development blocks
- ⑩ Attenuation features
- ⑪ Pedestrian connection to Green Lane



Site area:	2.58ha		
POS area (including attenuation ponds):	0.58ha - 22%		
Potential area for strategic landscaping:	0.95ha - 37%		
Net Developable Area:	1.06ha - 41%		
Net density (dph)	25	30	35
Housing no.	27	32	37



Part 3: Scheme Description

1.13 Proposals

1.13.1 The proposed development seeks to provide up to 30 dwellings, with a range of house types.

1.14 Landscape strategy

- Modest density, modest height development, geared towards local need.
- New trees and site wide planting that reinforces the local landscape character, improves site biodiversity and softens how the area is viewed within the wider landscape through a series of landscape breaks
- A native and biodiverse selection of species planted throughout the street scene, enhanced boundaries and as part of the proposed hilltop open space
- Creation of open space and walking routes with proposed pedestrian connections to Green Lane
- SuDS areas, through the addition of attenuation areas and wildlife corridors within the site's central route and open space
- Retained landscape features, including the majority of the site's trees and mature hedgerows and the ongoing maintenance of these areas.
- New areas of public open space / public amenity throughout the proposals

1.15 Mitigation features

- The ongoing maintenance / enhancement of the site's existing vegetation corridors
- New hedgerow / tree planting to areas of open space along the site's boundaries helping to soften the development edge
- Areas of tree planting within the development to help create green corridors and enhance amenity as well as site biodiversity - with specific emphasis on north south landscape breaks
- Landscaped areas and ongoing tree maintenance within the proposed development to help to soften potential views onto building elevations.
- Modest height development that does not exceed the height of neighbouring properties helping to ensure the development is concealed behind landscape proposals
- Enhanced site access, by creating a green entrance to the site and providing incidental areas of landscaping throughout the street scene, with additional proposed pedestrian connections onto Green Lane
- The creation of enhanced public open space to the east of the site in the high areas, to reinforce the sites existing character and enhance the area's ecological and recreational value.
- Create a wooded appearance and open space on the higher ground in accordance with character type Upper Farmed and Wooded Valley Slopes
- Enhanced areas of eastern hill top open space, with pedestrian connections with access onto Green Lane.

Part 4: Summary

1.16 Landscape Baseline Summary

- 1.16.1 The site does not sit within and landscape or historic designations, however it does sit in close proximity to the Blackdown Hills National Landscape (previously AONB).
- 1.16.2 The site is made up of two field parcels equating to 2.59ha and is currently laid to pasture, with likely livestock grazing. The two fields are bound on all sides by existing mature hedgerows typical of the surrounding landscape character, currently managed as part of the agricultural rotation by the land owner. The site has no significant notable trees, with the only aspects of tree planting being scrub and conifers localised to specific areas of the site boundary.
- 1.16.3 The western field sits at a lower level of approximately 120m AOD and is in-keeping with the height of surrounding built form - however the eastern field rises to 140m AOD and sits slightly higher than the existing built context.
- 1.16.4 Due to the site being outside of any national or regional designations, and being free from prominent landscape features, it would be deemed suitable for accommodating development, providing mitigation measures are incorporated to assimilate the development within the surrounding context.

1.17 Visual Baseline Summary

- 1.17.1 While the site is glimpsed from some higher value receptors, along PROW and Bridleway routes contained within the Blackdown Hills National Landscape area to the west, the area is intersected by areas of existing tree and hedgerow planting forming part of the field boundaries and lane edges throughout the surrounding context.
- 1.17.2 The site must be viewed in context of existing Chardstock, with the built form making up the wider village prominent in the foreground of the glimpse views towards the site.
- 1.17.3 The proposals look to add small areas of development to the eastern field - this would be seen as negligible in the context of Char_o4a proposed allocation for the site, with the mitigation proposals being effective in ensuring the development is sufficiently landscaped to assimilate into the context.

1.18 Summary of Proposals

- 1.18.1 Proposals seek to introduce low - medium density residential development within the site area. Illustrative proposals show site boundaries being reinforced with planting, both to increase biodiversity value; and to soften views onto the site, in particular the north and south.
- 1.18.2 The sites would benefit from the introduction and reinforcement of north south green infrastructure breaks, assisting in layering the landscape as the development moves to a higher elevation, helping to mitigate wider views, and assimilate the development within the landscape.
- 1.18.3 Reinforced eastern extents on the higher green with additional tree planting and open space would help to mitigate the overall extent and assist in containing the development within a landscape surround, in keeping with the local character.
- 1.18.4 Illustrative proposals also demonstrate the potential for several biodiversity enhancements within the site itself, through the introduction of entrance greens, and central open spaces - creating green and leafy street scenes.

