

# **WHS Setting and AONB Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for Land West of Twerton (Extended Area)**

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## **Contents**

1. Introduction and Definitions	Page 3
2. Baseline Site Description	Page 4
3. WHS Setting Assessment	Page 5
4. AONB Assessment	Page 7
Map TW Ext 1 Field Key	Page 9

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## **1. Introduction and Definitions**

- 1.1 The site is identified in Map TW ext. 1 – Field Key, which also indicates a smaller area (hatched). This was considered as part of the Arup Concept Options Report for West of Twerton (April 2013)
- 1.2 WHS Setting impact assessment uses relevant key aspects of significance(receptors) as developed in Bath WHS Setting SPD
- 1.3 This site lies outside the Cotswolds AONB but has significant influence upon it in terms of visual and tranquillity effects and hence an AONB impact assessment has been carried out. It uses relevant key aspects of significance as set out in AONB Management Plan 2013-2018 – Special Qualities of Significance (receptors)
- 1.4 Impact Assessment methodology is in principle as set out in the GLVIA 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition with one variation in the assessment of value of a receptor made for the WHS Setting receptors. It is taken as given that the WHS Setting is of international Importance and therefore receptors are of overall high value. However the WHS Setting SPD recognises that appropriate development is not precluded within the setting area and therefore guidance is given on assessing the value of particular aspects of significance receptors in the context of potential development sites. The gradings set out in the SPD are used here. There are no special modifications to the assessment of value set out in the AONB management plan and therefore the assessment of value for sites within the AONB necessarily is as set out in the GLVIA 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition and is always given as high. For sites outside the AONB but having influence on it the assessment of value may be less.
- 1.5 As recommended in the GLVIA 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition sensitivity, magnitude and significance of effects are scored on a simple low, low to medium, medium, medium to high and high scale. All effects of development were negative (detrimental) in the context of the WHS Setting and AONB
- 1.6 To make the impact assessment more meaningful the site was assessed in relation to a hypothetical two storey medium to high density housing development.

## **2. Baseline Site Description**

- 2.1 The site lies on a low hill top / plateau just south of the River Avon valley and just west of the point where the River Avon emerges from the containment of the city bowl and out into more gently rolling countryside. The hill top itself is somewhat elongated with the sky line running in a southwest to north /northeast direction. The hill is effectively the northernmost extent of a much eroded and indented plateau area to the south and south west. The south / south eastern facing aspect of the hill comprises very shallow slopes where it is effectively an extension of the plateau top. In contrast the north, northwest and north eastern aspect of the hill is steeply sloping and forms part of the river Avon valley side (N & NW) and Newton Brook valley side (NE)
- 2.2 The site comprises agricultural fields of varying shapes and sizes (generally medium to large) currently mostly in arable use. Overall the site is very open and field boundaries are generally clipped hedges. There is an area of woodland (Seven Acre Wood) in the centre of the site on the hill top which is a significant landscape feature and an area of young woodland on steep valley sides running down to Twerton Brook at the eastern edge of the site
- 2.3 To the south and south west the site is bounded by Pennyquick Lane; to the east by steep slopes of Newton Brook valley; to the north and northwest by The A4 Trunk Road and the main rail line linking Bristol and Bath.
- 2.4 Much of the site is prominent in various views from the A4 trunk road between Saltford and entering Bath, from parts of the A431 Upper Bristol Road, Pennyquick Lane to the south and parts of the A39 Corston Road to the west; from the Cotswolds AONB to the north particularly the Cotswolds Way and especially from the viewing point at Penn Hill; more distant but important views are from Alexandra Park and Lansdown Crescent in the centre of Bath; Kelston Roundhill, Prospect Stile and Beckford's Tower (all around Weston Valley)
- 2.5 The site occupies a hill feature which is itself an important component of the WHS setting to the west of the City. It has Landscape character, visual and historical WHS Setting associations as set out in the Bath WHS Setting SPD.

### 3. WHS Setting Assessment

<b>Landscape Character Effects</b>	
<b>Relevant Key Aspects of Significance Assessed</b>	Undeveloped hillsides within and surrounding city; Compact city form especially well defined edge; C18th picturesque principles including historic parks and gardens
<b>Sensitivity</b> (value + susceptibility to change caused by development effects)	<p><i>WHS Setting Value:</i> High            The Site lies on an undeveloped hill just beyond the containing bowl of the city but visible from within the city where the River Avon breaks through to run westward. The hillside is the first and most prominent of a sequence of hills outside the city bowl to the west. Its rural undeveloped nature reinforces the compact nature of the city contained within the bowl. It stands in contrast to the nearby slope where development at Twerton has leaked out of the containing bowl. The site setting is a gentle but complex landscape of hill and valley epitomising aspects of the Picturesque and prominent in views both from nearby Kelston Park and to a lesser extent from Newton Park. In respect of these, the setting value is therefore high, strongly conveying aspects of the Outstanding Universal Value</p> <p><i>Susceptibility - To change caused by estate type development:</i> High            All the fields within the site lie on visible parts of the undeveloped hillside / hill top as seen from within the WHS and its immediate setting. The site and the hillside, is entirely rural and separate from any developed part of the city. In some views however, its relative closeness to the housing at Twerton where it has leaked out of the bowl would mean that any development on the site would not only compromise the current undeveloped hillside but would also reinforce the damage which the Twerton development has caused to the compact city form. A good example of this is the sequential views along the A4 between Saltford and Bath where the city is remarkably well hidden currently apart from the Twerton settlement. The site and the aspects of significance it conveys are therefore highly susceptible to housing development of any type.</p> <p><b>Overall Sensitivity:</b> High</p>
<b>Magnitude of Effects</b>	High In terms of both geographical extent and scale / size of effect on the aspects of significance, development of any sort on this prominent hillside / hill top would be of high magnitude. Even if development did not extend over all the fields on the hill it would be so incongruous in terms of scale of change that the magnitude would remain high.
<b>Significance of Landscape Effects:</b>	High Negative
<b>Visual Effects</b>	
<b>Relevant Key Aspects of Significance Assessed</b>	General views over Avon & Weston valleys; Key Georgian viewpoints (Alexandra Park; Beckford's Tower; Kelston Roundhill, Lansdown Crescent); To & from important Georgian roads – Frome Road (now Pennyquick Lane), The A39 Lower Wells Road, the A431 Upper Bristol Road and the A4 Lower Bristol Road and the Globe Inn; to & from Key Georgian Buildings and viewpoints -

	Kelston Park
<b>Sensitivity</b> (value + susceptibility to change caused by development effects)	<p><i>WHS Setting Value:</i> High The Site lies on an undeveloped hill just beyond the containing bowl of the city but visible from within the city where the River Avon breaks through to run westward. In views from within the city especially Alexandra Park and Lansdown Crescent, the hillside/ hill top is the first and most prominent of a sequence of hills outside the city bowl and epitomises the picturesque beauty of the WHS setting. The site is widely viewed from across the Avon valley to the north (especially Kelston park) and north east and also up into the Weston Valley from Kelston Roundhill, and Beckford's Tower all of which are key Georgian viewing points. A number of Georgian roads run close to the site and have views to it, particularly Lower and Upper Bristol Roads and the old Frome Road (Pennyquick Lane). In respect of these, the setting value is therefore high, strongly conveying aspects of the Outstanding Universal Value</p> <p><i>Susceptibility - To change caused by estate type development:</i> High The site lies on a prominent undeveloped hillside / hilltop as seen from within the WHS and its immediate setting. Alexandra Park and Lansdown Crescent are key Georgian viewpoints within the city and looking westwards, the site lies on the first low hill in a sequence of hills of increasing height running westwards beyond the containing bowl of the city. Development on the site (whole or in part) would significantly detract from the current picturesque rural view. In some views, especially those from the north; both key Georgian Viewpoints (Kelston Roundhill, Kelston Park and Beckford's Tower) and more general views across the Avon valley; its relative closeness to Twerton housing where it has leaked out of the bowl would mean that any development on the site would not only compromise the current rural hillside view but also reinforce the negative visual impact of the Twerton development. The Lower and Upper Bristol Roads and the ancient Frome Road were regularly used for excursions around and out from the city. The Upper Bristol Road at Newbridge Road was particularly popular as a viewpoint overlooking Kelston Park and the picturesque rolling landscape (including this site) to the south across the Avon Valley. As such changes to the attractive rural views from these Georgian roads and viewing points would be incongruous. The site and the aspects of significance it conveys are therefore highly susceptible to housing development of any type.</p> <p><b>Overall Sensitivity:</b> High</p>
<b>Magnitude of Effects</b>	<p>High In terms of both the geographical extent, and scale / size of effect on the aspects of significance, development of any sort on this prominent hillside / hill top would be of high magnitude. Even if development did not extend over all the fields it would be so incongruous in terms of scale of change in views that the magnitude would remain high.</p>
<b>Significance of Visual Effects</b>	High Negative

<b>Historical Association Effects</b>	
<b>Relevant Key Aspects of Significance Assessed</b>	Evidence of Roman and pre-Roman occupation; Georgian Places of interest (Kelston Park & Newton Park); Historic Routes to and from the city - Frome Road (now Pennyquick Lane), The A39 Lower Wells Road, the A431 Upper Bristol Road and the A4 Lower Bristol Road and the Globe Inn
<b>Sensitivity</b> (value + susceptibility to change caused by development effects)	<p><i>WHS Setting Value:</i> High The site and its immediate surroundings are important in helping to convey a number of diverse historical associations associated with aspects of the Outstanding Universal Value. The landscape and land use of the site appears to have changed little from that in Georgian times and as such retains a continuity of landscape history</p> <p><i>Susceptibility</i> To change caused by estate type development: High Development on the site would introduce a break in the historical land use continuity of the site and its surroundings which would be highly damaging to the historical associations of views and context to the Georgian Parks, roads and viewing points (see the Susceptibility Section under Visual Effects above for more detailed discussion on the Georgian Road views); and the landscape context of the roman /pre-roman settlement evidence</p> <p><b>Overall Sensitivity:</b> High</p>
<b>Magnitude of Effects</b>	High Development in this location is so incongruous in relation to the existing rural countryside and its historical continuity that the effects of scale of change in particular are of high magnitude
<b>Significance of Historical Association Effects</b>	High Negative

#### 4. AONB Assessment

<b>Relevant Key Aspects of Significance</b>	Escarpment views; Tranquillity; Historical Associations – Kelston Park (Capability Brown – historic park); Distinctive Settlements, developed in the Cotswold vernacular, high architectural quality and integrity
<b>Sensitivity</b> (value + susceptibility to change caused by development effects)	<p><i>Value:</i> High Although the site is outside the AONB, it is prominent in particularly attractive rural views south from Kelston Park, the escarpment at Weston (Penn Hill and along Cotswolds Way), Kelston RoundHill and Lansdown. The undeveloped nature of the site also contributes to the tranquillity of the view. As such the value of the site is high.</p> <p><i>Susceptibility</i> to hypothetical medium to high density 2 storey housing: High Development on the site whether all or part, would be very prominent in the views especially from Kelston Park; from the escarpment both closer views such as at Penn Hill and along the</p>

	<p>Cotswolds Way and also the spectacular panoramic views at Kelston Roundhill and also the top of Beckford's Tower. The site lies within a very attractive, gentle yet quite complex landscape of low hills and valleys to the south of the River Avon. It is characteristically very rural with little settlement in view. Such village settlements as there are tend to be set down low in the landscape whereas this site is on a hillside / hill top and significantly more prominent. To the east in the view there is however the edge of Twerton development which leaks down out of the characteristic bowl of the City and is very incongruous in that part of the view. Since the site lies physically quite close to Twerton, development there would only serve to exacerbate and draw the eye to this urban incongruity in an otherwise beautiful and tranquil landscape. The site also lies close to Corston to the west and development would be detrimental to its integrity as a distinctive settlement in the Cotswold vernacular. This would be very clearly seen in views from the AONB. Hence the receptor views and the overall quality of visual tranquillity are highly susceptible to the effects of development on the site.</p> <p><b>Overall Sensitivity: High</b></p>
<p><b>Magnitude of Effects</b></p>	<p>High  In terms of both the geographical extent, and scale / size of effect on the aspects of significance, development of any sort on this prominent hillside / hill top would be of high magnitude. Even if development did not extend over all the fields it would be so incongruous in terms of scale of change in views that the magnitude would remain high.</p>
<p><b>Significance of Effects</b></p>	<p>High negative</p>

