

WEST BERKSHIRE COUNCIL

**LANDSCAPE CAPACITY ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL HOUSING SITES WITHIN AND
ADJACENT TO THE NORTH WESSEX DOWNS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY IN
WEST BERKSHIRE**

FINAL PHASE 2 REPORT: PANGBOURNE

PANGBOURNE

Assessment of Settlement

Settlement	Pangbourne
North Wessex Downs AONB Character area	LCA 2B Ashampstead Downs downland with woodland (west of A340)
Date of site survey	16 June 2014
Surveyors	BK

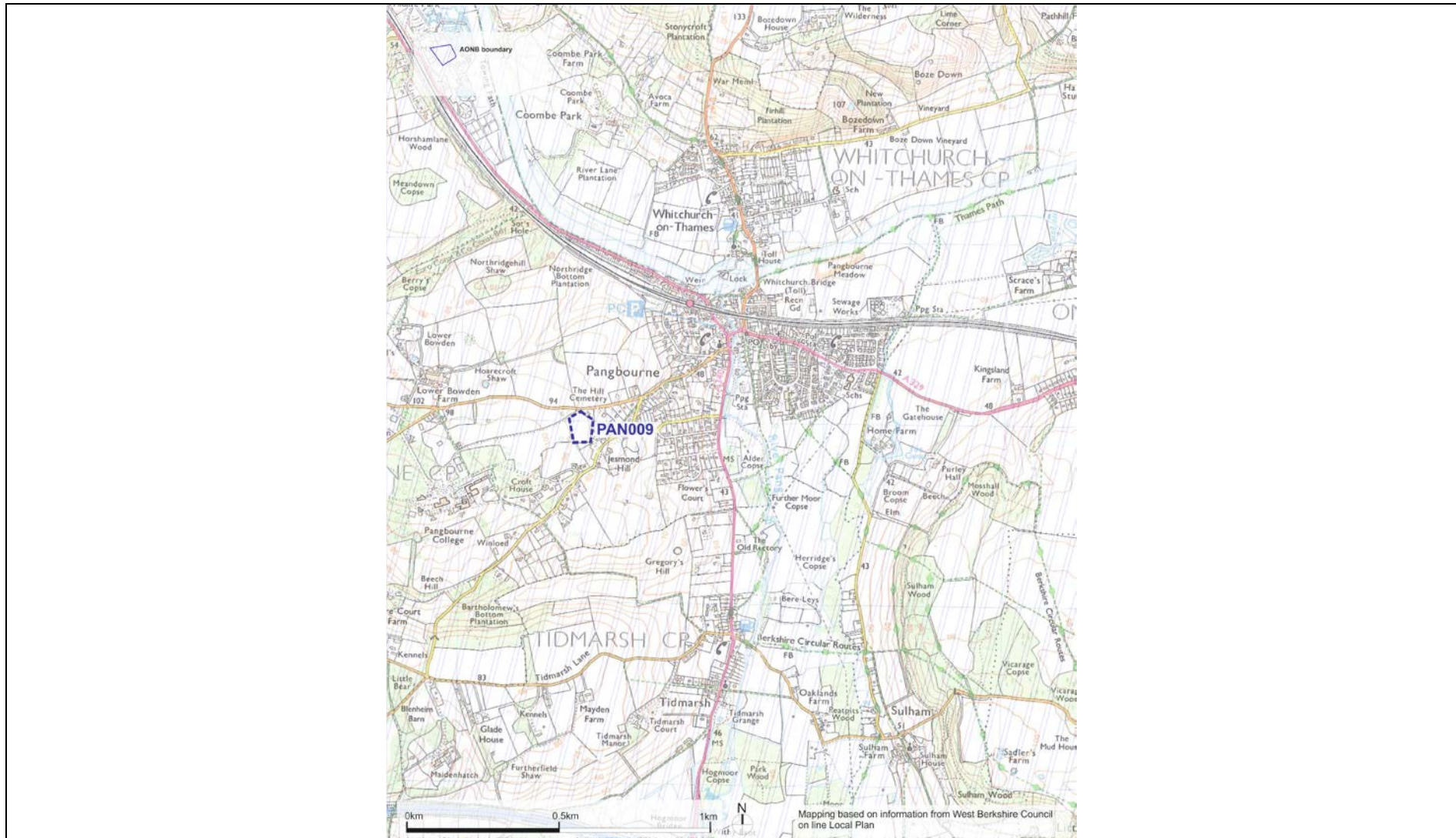


Figure PAN.1: Pangbourne potential housing sites

Key landscape characteristics

AONB LCA 2B Ashampstead Downs (unless source noted otherwise)

- Plateau incised by dry valleys running east-west
- Extensive interconnected semi-natural woodland on valley sides and steep slopes
- Pasture, including remnant herb rich grassland, concentrated along the steeper slopes, particularly along the escarpments or valleys
- Intricate network of minor roads, rural lanes and tracks, lined by dense hedgerows and woodland edges
- Varied field pattern including sinuous medieval and post medieval enclosure and regular, straight edged open fields resulting from parliamentary enclosure
- Historic features including archaeological sites, parkland and historic field pattern
- Unsympathetic modern forestry plantations
- Quiet rural landscape
- Historically, the landscape was a mix of fields, woods and commons and small settlements, and farms were scattered throughout the zone. The combination of land-use and topography gave a very sinuous grain to the landscape (HECZ: Pang-Thames Modernised Landscape)
- Reorganised fields derived from pre 18th C irregular fields (HLC): both SHLAA sites
- Strong contrast between settlement and surrounding countryside (VDS)
- Contrast between floodplain to east and hills to west (VDS)
- Strips of arable fields between river valleys and upland chalk (NDLCA LCT 2): PAN001
- Hedgerows, hedgerow trees, banks and wide grass verges (NDLCA LCT 2): PAN001
- Large scale landscape grain (NDLCA LCT4): PAN002
- Dramatic landform (BLCA LCA N1): PAN002
- Settlement strongly influenced by topography with settlement in the valleys (NDLCA LCT2 and 4)
- Wooded dry valleys (VDS)
- Historic Bere Court and Pangbourne College (VDS)

Key visual characteristics

AONB LCA 2B Ashampstead Downs (unless source noted otherwise)

- Mainly enclosed by woodland with restricted views
- Arable hillsides more exposed and of fragmented appearance (BLCA LCA F3): PAN001
- Views of the river and river meadows (VDS)
- Views from Pangbourne Hill to the Chilterns (VDS)

Key settlement characteristics

AONB LCA 2B Ashampstead Downs (unless source noted otherwise)

- Hamlets and small villages clustered around cross roads or a small green
- Early 20th century and recent housing developments that have expanded out from the historic village of Pangbourne (HECZ: Pangbourne Suburban Area)
- Compact settlement (VDS)
- Growth since the medieval period in response to location on the rivers Thames and Pang; location on coaching road from Reading to Oxford; and coming of railway line along valley (VDS)
- Strong village centre and pattern of housing reflecting growth over time (VDS)
- Distinctive gateways into the village (VDS)
- Character of the former Breedon estate west of Tidmarsh Road is dominated by the landscape rather than the houses themselves (VDS)

Summary of the key characteristics of the settlement and landscape constraints on the extent and location of development

The settlement at Pangbourne, and its hinterland, has two distinct character areas: the river valleys of the Pang and Thames in the north, east and south-east; and the rising open hillsides of Ashampstead Downs in the west and south-west. The village remains compact and, despite more recent development up the valley hillsides, retains its importance as a settlement on the confluence of these two rivers. Away from the village settlement the character is sparse and scattered, providing great contrast with the urban Reading conurbation. North of the railway line the Thames landscape remains dominant with small scale older housing areas. South of the railway line the centre has a variety of small areas of development but much larger estates are a common feature on the periphery. The impact of the existing built form is mitigated by the heavily landscaped setting of the former Breedon Estate. Housing which has crept up the hillsides to the west of the Pang corridor, is of decreasing density and increasing vegetation cover further up the hillside. With the exception of an outlier at Jesmond Hill, most of this housing sits below the 70m AOD. East of the Pang housing has spread across the valley floor between this river and Sulham Brook. However the remaining open valley floor and its riparian landscape, and the open agricultural hillsides are all important to the setting of the settlement, along with the meadows of the Thames. Any proposed development which would result in further incursion into the surviving riparian landscapes of the Pang and the Thames or which was sited on the exposed open slopes is likely to have a detrimental affect on the special qualities of the AONB and the settlement of Pangbourne. New development sites within the riparian landscape setting of the river Thames, river Pang or Sulham Brook would harm a number of locally and nationally important features of the AONB.

The area is also noted for the views across the River Thames and to the Chilterns AONB and from and to the open slopes. It will also be important to protect the character of its rural lanes and the gateways to the village, and the sense of tranquillity, despite the proximity of Reading.

Some of the field sizes on the perimeter of the settlement are large and not easy to sub-divide. The landform, orientation of the field, relationship to the settlement pattern and ability to include a high cover of vegetation will determine a site's suitability for new housing. It is important that the current perception of compactness is not lost through expansion into visually exposed areas.

Sources:

North Wessex Downs AONB Integrated Landscape Character Assessment 2002

Additional information from:

- Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment 2003 (BLCA)
- Newbury District Landscape Character Assessment 1993 (NDLCA)
- Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC)
- Historic Environment Character Zoning (HECZ)
- Quality Design SPD- Part 3
- Pangbourne Village Plan (VDS)
- Landscape Sensitivity Assessment of the Scale and Distribution of Development in the North Wessex Downs AONB (2011) (LSA 2011)

Assessment of Potential Housing Site: PAN009: BURFIELD, PANGBOURNE HILL

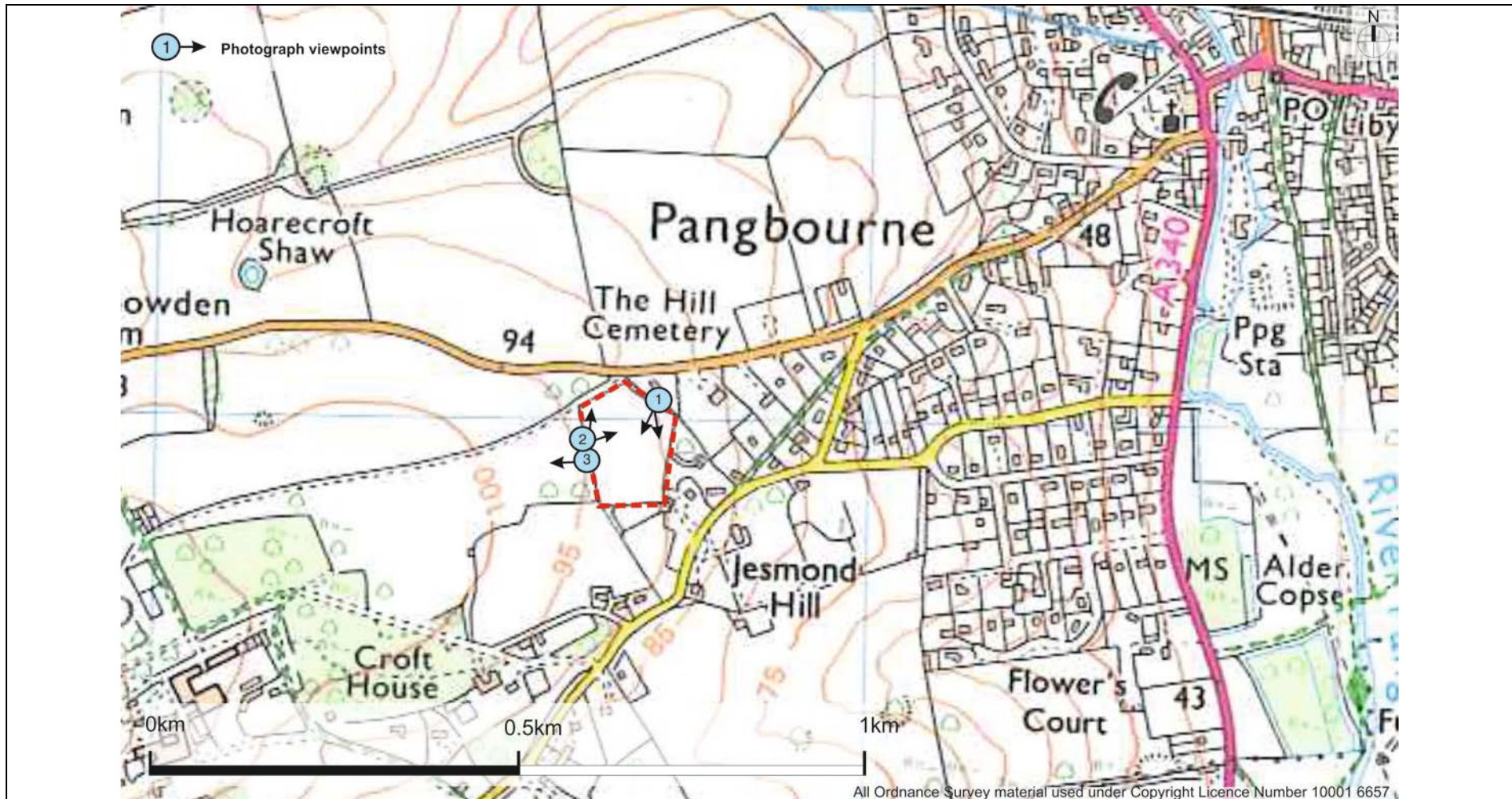


Figure PAN009.I: Site and viewpoint locations

PHOTOGRAPHS



Viewpoint 1: View from south of the house looking south over area of rough grassland towards Bere Court Road



Viewpoint 2: View from western edge of the site looking east to Burfield. Pangbourne Hill lies behind the tree line



Viewpoint 3: View from western edge of site looking west over Pangbourne College Grounds

Site description

Site PAN009 forms the main part of a large, mainly enclosed, garden at Burfield which extends to the west and south of the house. It lies on land between 90m AOD and 95m AOD falling gently from west to east. Part of the garden is mown lawn, and part rough grassland with scattered trees and shrubs. To the north the site is bounded by a mature belt of trees along a disused track off Pangbourne Hill. North of Pangbourne Hill lies The Hill Cemetery with open fields beyond. To the east lies the house and ornamental gardens beyond which lie mature trees separating the site from the adjacent property. The open grounds of Pangbourne College extend westward separated by an open boundary, newly planted with trees. To the south-east the site is separated from adjacent property by mature conifers and woodland and to the south by a line of mature trees. The housing east and south of the site is of a very low density with extensive gardens.

Relationship with adjacent settlement <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Site lies on the western extremity of Pangbourne• Well above the 70m AOD contour which defines the settlement of Pangbourne• Adjacent housing within the AONB on Jesmond Hill lies below 90m AOD to the east and south is very low density and has large gardens• Typical of AONB pattern of enclosed large gardens on the Jesmond Hill /Pangbourne Hill edge of Pangbourne
Relationship with adjacent wider countryside <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Site is enclosed by settlement edge tree belts and woodland• Lies on upper slopes of Pangbourne Hill• Not typical of surrounding open landscape• Intervisibility with open grounds of Pangbourne College
Impact on key landscape characteristics <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Potential impact on important tree belts and woodland at the interface between the open Pangbourne Hill area and more enclosed Jesmond Hill area• Loss of typical large garden on village edge• Loss of vegetation cover along Pangbourne Hill and on site to facilitate highway access
Impact on key visual characteristics <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No visual impact on Pangbourne Hill (subject to potential opening up to provide site access)• Visual impact on the Pangbourne College grounds within the AONB• Limited impact on public view points in the AONB
Impact on key settlement characteristics <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expansion beyond compact limits of Pangbourne below 90m AOD at Jesmond Hill and 70m AOD for the village in general• Typical modern housing densities would not be in keeping with the local built form pattern at Jesmond Hill, up Pangbourne Hill and east of the site
Summary of compliance with NPPF <p>Development on this site would result in significant harm to the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB.</p>
Recommendations <p>The site should not be pursued further as a potential housing site on landscape grounds.</p>