

**WHS Setting and AONB Landscape and Visual
Impact Assessment for Eastern / North
Eastern Slopes at Weston**

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WHS Setting and AONB Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for Eastern / North Eastern Slopes at Weston

1. Introduction and Definitions

- 1.1 This is such an extensive area for assessment along the whole northern valley side that it was necessary to carry out field by field assessment of lower slopes. Fields are identified by letter in accordance with Map W1. Appendix Weston 1 contains the full field by field assessment report.
- 1.2 The assessment area was generally limited to the first level of fields up the slope from the existing developed edge along the entire valley side and including a limited area across Lansdown Lane at the northern end of the settlement. It is recognised that the undeveloped Weston valley sides are important components of both the WHS Setting and AONB. They would be increasingly negatively affected by development on the undeveloped valley side with increased distance from the existing settlement.
- 1.3 WHS Setting impact assessment uses relevant key aspects of significance (receptors) as developed in Bath WHS Setting SPD
- 1.4 AONB impact assessment uses relevant key aspects of significance (receptors) as set out in AONB Management Plan 2013-2018 – Special Qualities of Significance
- 1.5 Impact Assessment methodology is in principle as set out in the GLVIA 3rd Edition with one variation in the assessment of value of a receptor made for the WHS Setting receptors. It is taken as given that the WHS Setting is of international Importance and therefore receptors are of overall high value. However the WHS Setting SPD recognises that appropriate development is not precluded within the setting area and therefore guidance is given on assessing the value of particular aspects of significance receptors in the context of potential development sites. The gradings set out in the SPD are used here. There are no special modifications to the assessment of value set out in the AONB management plan and therefore the assessment of value for the AONB necessarily is as set out in the GLVIA 3rd Edition and is always given as high.
- 1.6 As recommended in the GLVIA 3rd Edition sensitivity, magnitude and significance 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
- 1.7 To make the impact assessment more meaningful the sites were assessed in relation to a hypothetical housing development reflecting the more recent 2 storey medium density housing estate homes to be found throughout Weston. In addition for fields L1 and L2 at the Primrose Hill end of Weston a second housing type comprising large individual villas up to 3.5 storey set in large gardens has been assessed

2. WHS Setting Assessment- Site Description

- 2.1 Weston valley lies on the northwest outskirts of Bath and is a tributary valley of the River Avon. The valley cross section is asymmetrical with a shorter, much steeper and more indented slope on the Western/south western side and a longer slightly less steep and indented slope on the eastern / north eastern side. Weston village runs up the accessible part of the valley and lies largely in the base of the valley and the shallower lower slopes of the eastern / north eastern valley side. The older village core of Weston is at the lowest Southern end of the valley.
- 2.2 The undeveloped slopes on both sides of the valley are high quality open rural landscapes of mainly pasture fields with a little arable on shallower slopes, good hedgerows, copses, tree belts and some woodland. The landscape character of each valley sides is subtly different principally due to the underlying variations of landform and its effect on agricultural viability. The western slopes are steep and complex in landform with an intricate mix of different shapes and sizes of field. The largest area of mature woodland also lies on this side of the valley. There is virtually no development apart from farms on this side of the valley.
- 2.3 The eastern slopes are less complex, overall less steep with a larger scale and simpler landform dominated by one large tributary valley feature in the central part of the valley and one smaller valley further to the north between the riding stables and Lansdown Lane. Fields are generally larger but still irregular in shape. The largest, shallowest fields are used for silage or arable. Development has encroached up the slope on this side of the valley in several places.
- 2.4 Beckford's Tower, an important Georgian Landmark, stands on the Lansdown plateau at the head of the central tributary valley on the eastern / south eastern valley side. Prospect Stile, a well-known Georgian viewpoint looks over the valley from the plateau at the head of the valley.

3. WHS Setting Assessment

Landscape Character Effects	
Relevant Key Aspects of Significance Assessed	Visual harmony between development and countryside; Undeveloped hillsides within and surrounding the city; Compact city form especially well defined edge to development
Visual Effects	
Relevant Key Aspects of Significance Assessed	General views to and across Avon and Weston valleys; Key Georgian viewpoints & landmarks (Beckford's Tower; Prospect Stile; Kelston Roundhill)
Historical Association Effects	
Relevant Key Aspects of Significance Assessed	Georgian places of interest and buildings in their settings (Beckford's Tower)
Sensitivity- Landscape Character, Visual Effects and Historical Association Effects Summarised (value + susceptibility to change caused by development effects)	<p><i>WHS Setting Value:</i> Varies from low to high depending on particular field assessed. The majority of fields were assessed as medium with the central valley feature as high. Only three small fields were assessed as low due to small size or hidden nature principally combined with strong relationship with the more modern housing. All are northwest of the central tributary valley.</p> <p><i>Susceptibility</i> To change caused by estate type development: Varies from Low to high depending on particular field assessed. There was general consistency in the field by field survey for landscape character, visual and where relevant, historical association effects. To the northwest of the central valley feature and across Lansdown Lane the fields assessed had either low or medium susceptibility to development effects largely due to their good visual relationship to existing development being effectively tucked behind housing.</p> <p>However in contrast the central valley feature has high susceptibility to development effects due to the nature of its landform, field pattern and visual separation from the existing settlement all of which are related to visual harmony, the undeveloped valleys sides, views across the valley and the nature of the compact city; and especially with respect to the setting of Beckford's Tower at the head of the valley and views to and from it (visual and historical association effects)</p> <p>To the south east of the valley feature are two remaining fields both of which had high susceptibility in the higher parts of the fields and lower susceptibility down behind the existing housing. However the field closest to Primrose Hill is influenced by its character and also by the character of the older part of Weston village and is highly negatively susceptible to estate type housing throughout. It would only be less susceptible to development which related well to the character of these neighbourhoods such as low density villa type properties in large gardens and only in the lowest third of the field.</p> <p>Overall Sensitivity (a function of value and susceptibility combined): Generally high to the southeast of and including the</p>

	central valley feature; low to medium northwest of the central valley feature
Magnitude of Effects	Variable over the length of the valley but generally higher where the fields were more influenced by the character of and were visually more strongly related to, the undeveloped hillside than the existing development. Magnitude in those situations had a geographical extent of effect which was often more extensive than the site itself and involved scale of change which was highly incongruous with the existing landscape. This was particularly the case with the central valley feature where the magnitude of effect is high throughout. Again there was a divide along the valley side with fields southeast of and including the central valley having generally high or medium magnitude of effect and fields northwest of the valley, having low or more commonly medium magnitude of effect.
Significance of Landscape and Visual Effects	Overall, there was a strong divide along the valley side with fields southeast of and including the central valley having higher negative significance of effect and fields northwest of the valley, lower negative significance of effect. Where fields score a high negative significance, development has an unacceptable impact on the WHS Setting which cannot be mitigated. Where fields score medium negative significance, development has a considerable detrimental effect on the WHS Setting but one which potentially could be mitigated. Where fields score low negative significance, development has a relatively slight detrimental effect assuming sensitive high quality design; and little mitigation may be required.

4. AONB Assessment- Site Description

- 4.1 Weston valley lies on the northwest outskirts of Bath and is a tributary valley of the River Avon. The valley cross section is asymmetrical with a shorter, much steeper and more indented slope on the Western/south western side and a longer slightly less steep and indented slope on the eastern / north eastern side. The settlement of Weston runs up the accessible part of the valley and lies principally in the base of the valley and on the shallower lower slopes of the eastern / north eastern valley side. The older village core of Weston is at the lowest Southern end of the valley and more recent development has extended up the line of the valley and also gradually up the eastern/ N. eastern slopes.
- 4.2 The undeveloped slopes on both sides of the valley are high quality open rural landscapes of mainly pasture fields with a little arable on shallower slopes, good hedgerows, copses, tree belts and some woodland. The landscape character of each valley sides is subtly different principally due to the underlying variations of landform and its effect on agricultural viability. The western slopes are steep and complex in landform with an intricate mix of different shapes and sizes of field. The largest area of mature woodland also lies on this side of the valley. There is virtually no development apart from farms on this side of the valley.
- 4.3 The eastern slopes are less complex, overall less steep with a larger scale and simpler landform dominated by one large tributary valley feature in the central part of the valley and one smaller valley further to the north between the riding stables and Lansdown Lane. Fields are generally larger but still irregular in shape. The largest, shallowest fields are used for silage or arable. Development has encroached up the slope on this side of the valley in several places.
- 4.4 Beckford's Tower, an important Georgian Landmark, stands on the Lansdown plateau at the head of the central tributary valley on the eastern / south eastern valley side. Prospect Stile, a well-known Georgian viewpoint looks over the valley from the plateau at the head of the valley.

5. AONB Assessment

<p>Relevant Key Aspects of Significance</p>	<p>Escarpment views; Tranquillity; Accessible Landscape for quiet recreation</p>
<p>Sensitivity (value + susceptibility to change caused by development effects)</p>	<p><i>AONB Value:</i> High (see Introduction and Definitions section in main body of report for explanation of AONB and WHS Setting value) <i>Susceptibility</i> To change caused by estate type development: Varies from Low to high depending on particular field assessed. There was general consistency for all the aspects of significance assessed in the field by field survey. To the northwest of the central valley feature and across Lansdown Lane the fields assessed had either low or medium susceptibility to development effects largely due to their good physical and visual relationship to existing development being either effectively tucked behind housing or set down the slope below the existing housing line. Hence tranquillity and views were less negatively affected. However in contrast the central valley feature has high susceptibility to development effects due to the nature of its landform, field pattern and visual separation from the existing settlement. Development would significantly reduce tranquillity and be damaging to views from the Cotswold Way across the valley. To the south east of the valley feature are two remaining fields one of which had high susceptibility in the higher part of the field and lower susceptibility where the field dipped down into the existing housing. However the field closest to Primrose Hill had high susceptibility throughout because of its particular importance for accessibility and quiet recreation at a location which gives easy pedestrian access onto the undeveloped valley side for a significant local population from a wider catchment than the Weston valley.</p> <p>Overall Sensitivity (a function of value and susceptibility combined): Generally high to the southeast of and including the central valley feature and low to medium northwest of the central valley feature</p>
<p>Magnitude of Effects</p>	<p>Variable over the length of the valley but generally higher where the fields were more influenced by the character of and were visually more strongly related to, the undeveloped</p>

	<p>hillside than the existing development. Magnitude in those situations had a geographical extent of effect which was often more extensive than the site itself and involved scale of change which was highly incongruous with the existing landscape. This was particularly the case with the central valley feature where the magnitude of effect is high throughout. Again there was a divide along the valley side with fields southeast of and including the central valley having generally high or medium magnitude of effect and fields northwest of the valley, having low or more commonly medium magnitude of effect.</p>
<p>Significance of Landscape and Visual Effects</p>	<p>Overall, there was a strong divide along the valley side with fields southeast of and including the central valley having high negative significance of effect and fields northwest of the valley, lower negative significance of effect. Where fields score a high or medium to high negative significance, development has an unacceptable impact on the WHS Setting which cannot be mitigated. Where fields score medium or low to medium negative significance, development has a considerable detrimental effect on the WHS Setting but one which potentially could be mitigated. Where fields score low negative significance, development has a relatively slight detrimental effect assuming sensitive high quality design; and little mitigation may be required.</p>

6. Summary WHS Setting and AONB Impact Assessment

6.1 The following table (Table 1) in conjunction with Map W2 summarises the field by field impact assessment of the eastern /north eastern lower valley slopes. It shows which fields fall into each significance category and the development potential for each category. For the combined WHS & AONB assessment the significance score which is higher has been selected wherever there was a difference in significance of development effect between WHS setting and AONB.

6.2 Fields L1 and L2 close to Primrose Hill were assessed for two potential types of development – estate type similar to the more modern estates in Weston; and traditional villas set in medium to large gardens typical of Primrose hill and older Weston village.

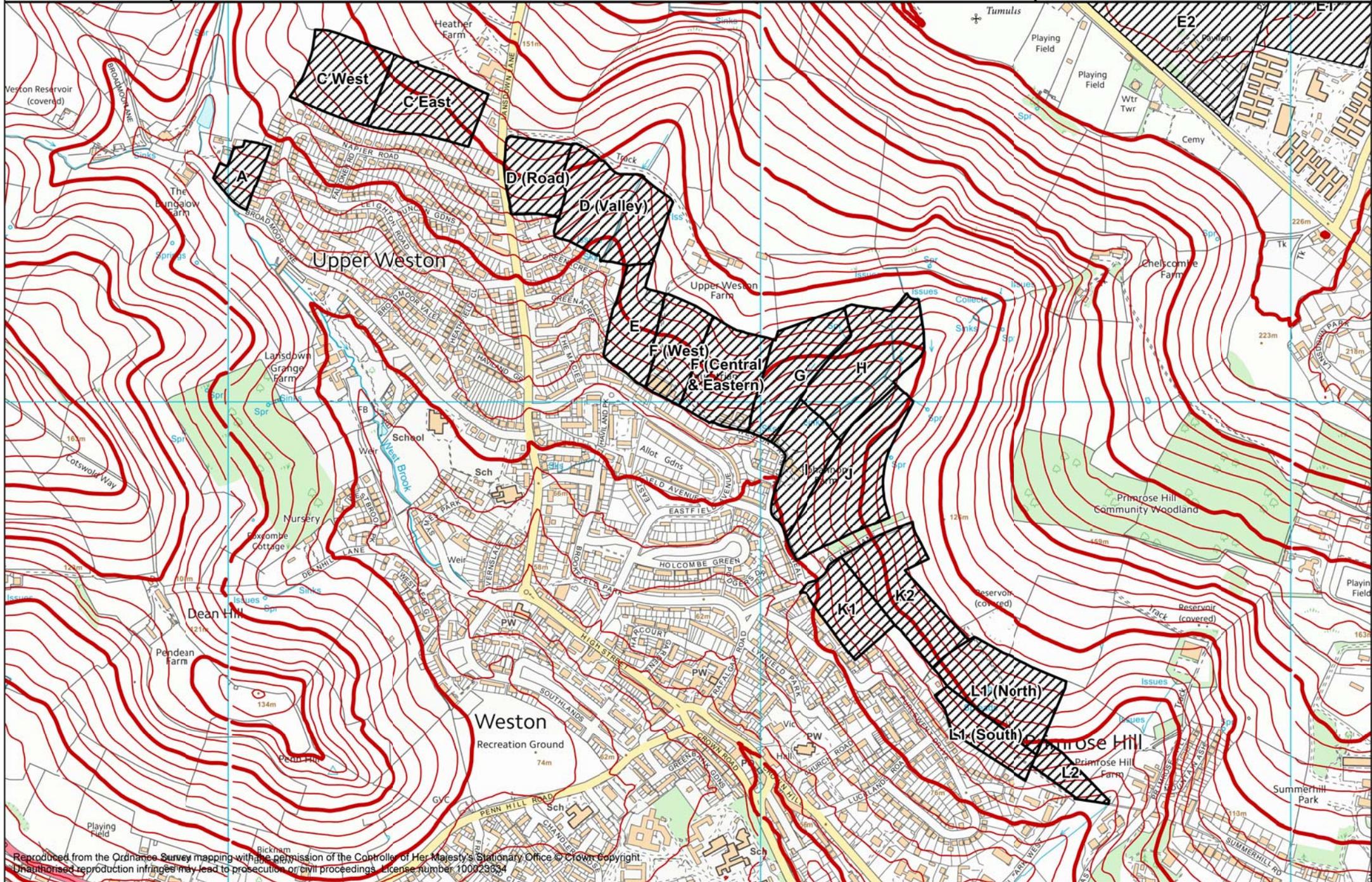
6.3 Fields C, F and K were found to vary in significance of effect within each field and are divided accordingly in the table. Three fields were included in area D and are distinguished in the assessment as D(road) – 1 field and D(valley) 2 fields. Fields G, H, I, J were assessed together as they formed small parts of a particularly strong valley feature.

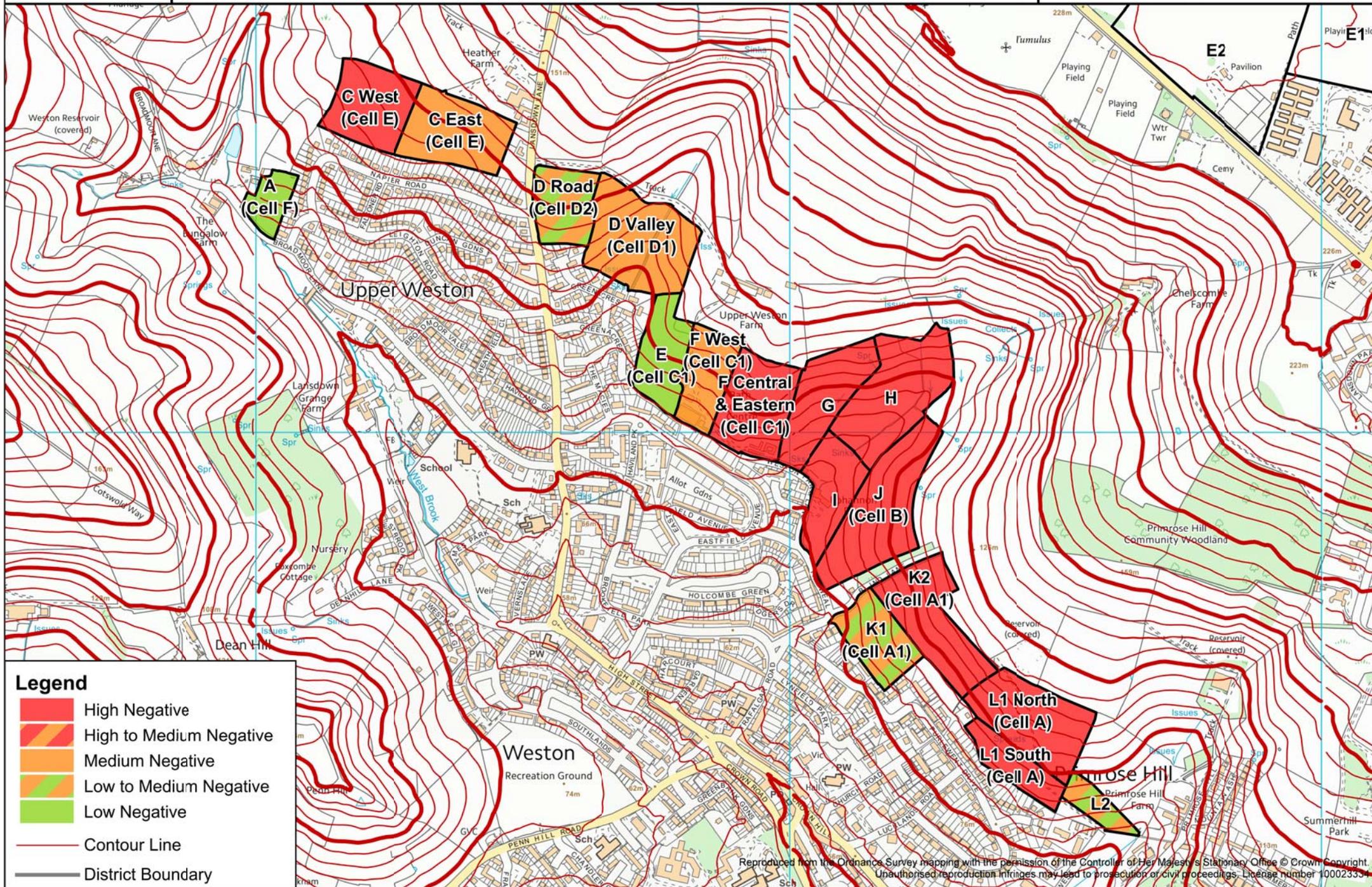
6.4 Table1 should be read in conjunction with Map W2 – Summary Weston Valley WHS Setting and AONB Assessment Map

Significance of Effect (-ve)	WHS Setting	AONB	Combined WHS & AONB Assessment	Mitigation Potential
High	L1 (estate development), L2(estate development), K2, valley(G,H,I,J), F(central & east), C(west)	L1, K2, valley(G,H,I,J), F(central & east), C(west)	L1, L2(Estate development), K2, valley(G,H,I,J), F(central & eastern), C(west),	Development would have unacceptable impact on WHS Setting & AONB which cannot be mitigated
Medium to High		L2(estate development)		Development would have unacceptable impact on WHS & AONB. Satisfactory mitigation unlikely
Medium	L1(villa development), L2 (villa development), F(west), D(valley), C(East)	F(west), D(valley), C(East)	L2(villa development), F(West), D(valley) C(East)	Yes - may need significant mitigation
Low to Medium		L2(villa development), K1, D(road)	K1	Yes
Low	K1,D(road), E, A	E, A	A, D(road), E	Yes

Table 1 Summary of Field by Field Assessment

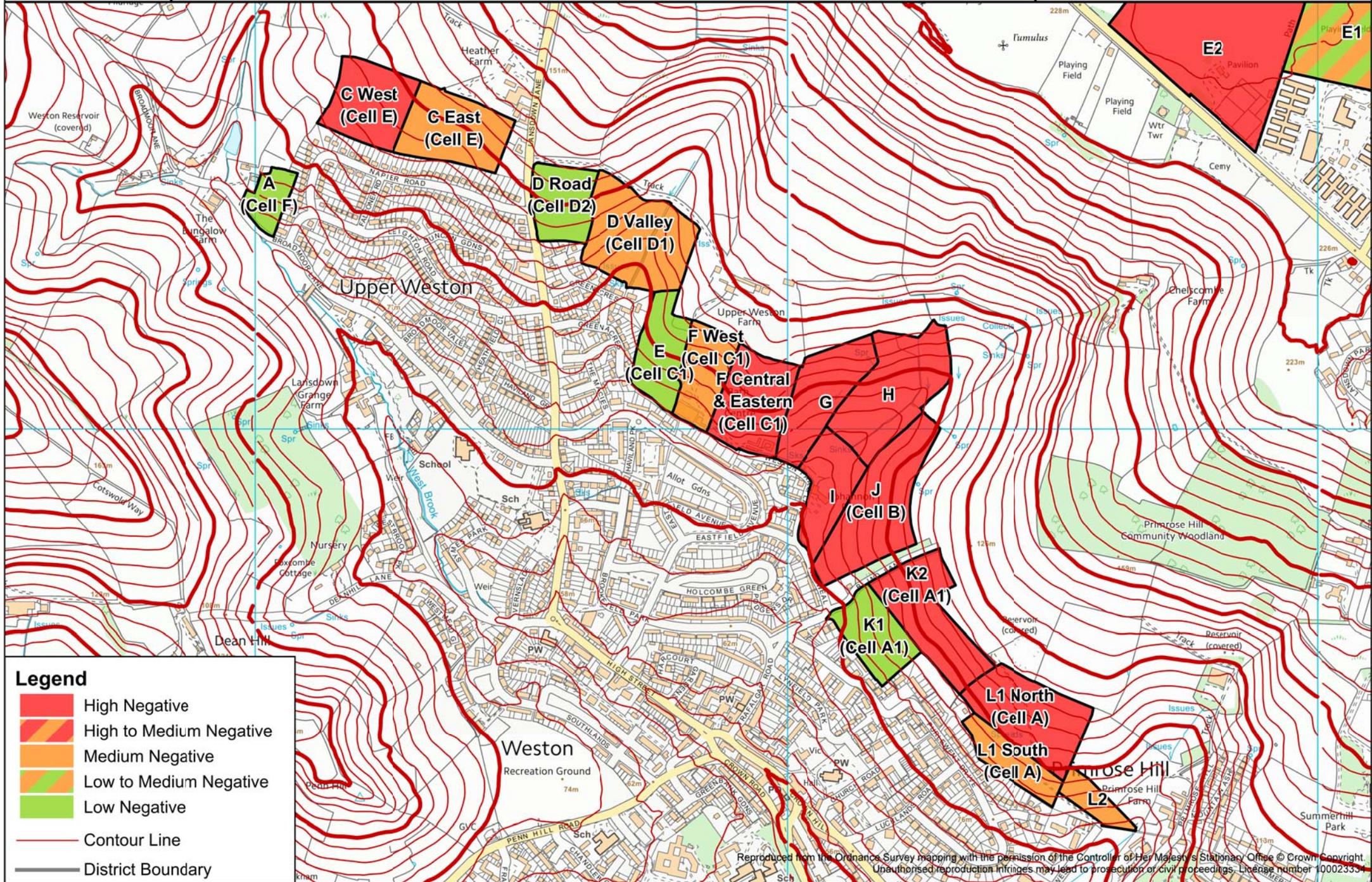
6.5 Overall there is, perhaps counter intuitively, lower negative impact on both WHS Setting and AONB, towards the north west of the valley side than at the eastern end even though the north west of the valley is further from city itself. This is primarily a function of landform, aspect and visual effects which are peculiar to the particular setting of each field site and its surroundings. Field L1 at the eastern end of the valley side differed in that public access was the key factor of significance.





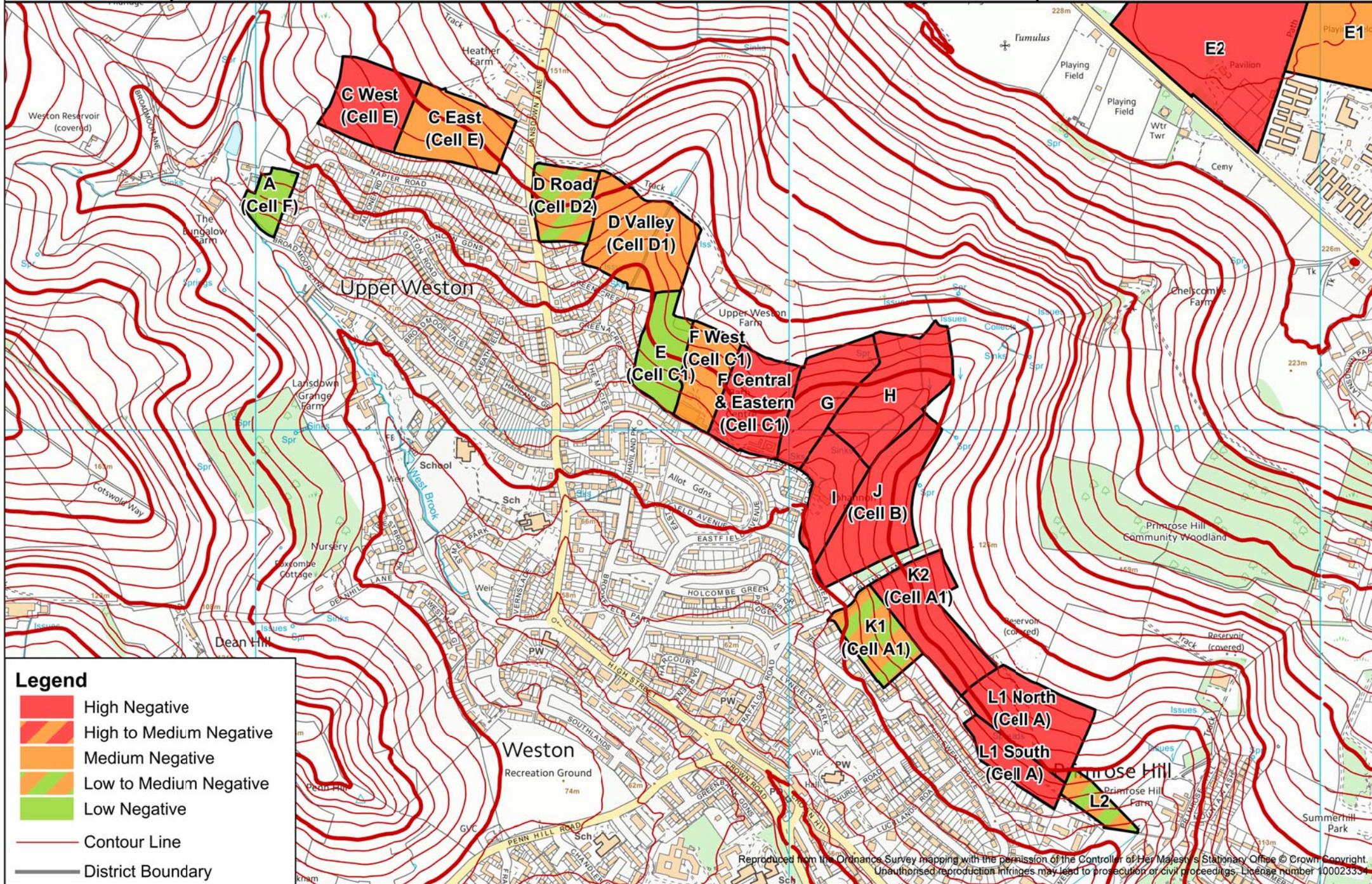
Legend

- High Negative
- High to Medium Negative
- Medium Negative
- Low to Medium Negative
- Low Negative
- Contour Line
- District Boundary



Legend

- High Negative
- High to Medium Negative
- Medium Negative
- Low to Medium Negative
- Low Negative
- Contour Line
- District Boundary



Legend

- High Negative
- High to Medium Negative
- Medium Negative
- Low to Medium Negative
- Low Negative
- Contour Line
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**WHS Setting and AONB Landscape and Visual
Assessment for Additional Fields at Upper Weston
Adjacent to Broadmoor Lane**

WHS Setting and AONB Landscape and Visual Assessment for Additional Fields at Upper Weston Adjacent to Broadmoor Lane

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WHS Setting and AONB Landscape and Visual Assessment for Additional Fields at Upper Weston Adjacent to Broadmoor Lane

Refer to Map UW 1- Field Key

1. Introduction and definitions

- 1.1. WHS Setting impact assessment uses relevant key aspects of significance (receptors) as developed in Bath WHS Setting SPD
- 1.2. AONB impact assessment uses relevant key aspects of significance (receptors) as set out in AONB Management Plan 2013-2018 – Special Qualities of Significance
- 1.3. Impact Assessment methodology is in principle as set out in the GLVIA 3rd Edition with one variation in the assessment of value of a receptor made for the WHS Setting receptors. It is taken as given that the WHS Setting is of international Importance and therefore receptors are of overall high value. However the WHS Setting SPD recognises that appropriate development is not precluded within the setting area and therefore guidance is given on assessing the value of particular aspects of significance receptors in the context of potential development sites. The gradings set out in the SPD are used here. There are no special modifications to the assessment of value set out in the AONB management plan and therefore the assessment of value for the AONB necessarily is as set out in the GLVIA 3rd Edition and is always given as high. However development is not precluded in appropriate circumstances
- 1.4. As recommended in the GLVIA 3rd Edition sensitivity, magnitude and significance of effects are scored on a simple low, low to medium, medium, medium to high and high scale. All effects of development were negative (detrimental) in the context of the WHS Setting and AONB
- 1.5. To make the impact assessment more meaningful the sites were assessed in relation to a hypothetical housing development reflecting the more recent 2 storey medium density housing estate homes to be found throughout Weston.

2. Site Description

- 2.1. The assessment site comprises two small to medium, elongated rectangular pasture fields at the bottom of the undeveloped Western valley side at Upper Weston. The more southerly field begins just to the north of Lansdown Grange Farm. The more northerly field runs up to another large group of farm buildings. West Brook and a PROW form the immediate eastern boundary of both fields until the brook disappears somewhere along the upper field boundary. The upper field also abuts Broadmoor Lane for half of its length; the remainder and all the southern field are set back from the lane behind a small field, a row of cottages which runs a right angles to the Lane and small wooded gardens. The remaining field boundaries are generally clipped hedges except for the western boundary of the upper field which is a taller hedgerow with some small trees. Across Broadmoor Lane from the site is the built up area of Upper Weston.
- 2.2. The western valley side is much steeper overall than the north and eastern sides and the assessment fields are also steeply sloping except at the very bottom by the eastern boundary.

3. Combined Assessment summary

- 3.1. There is a high negative significance of effects for both WHS Setting and AONB. The western valley side epitomises the landscape and visual qualities of both the AONB and the undeveloped slopes of the landscape “bowl” of the city of Bath. It is one of the few valley slopes in the city area which remains largely undeveloped. Any development encroaching on the slopes reduces this quality and its detriment cannot be mitigated.

4. WHS Setting Assessment

<i>Landscape Character Effects</i>	
Relevant Key Aspects of Significance Assessed	Visual harmony; Undeveloped hillsides within and surrounding city; Compact city form especially well defined edge
Sensitivity (value + susceptibility to change caused by development effects)	<p><i>WHS Setting Value:</i> Medium to high These fields are an integral part of the attractive landscape of the western undeveloped valley side at upper Weston and abut the settlement edge which is contained across both West Brook and Broadmoor Lane. As a small part of the whole undeveloped hillside which is important in conveying the attributes of visual harmony, undeveloped hillside and compact city, the value is assessed as medium to high.</p> <p><i>Susceptibility</i> To change caused by estate type development: High The western slope of Weston valley remains almost entirely undeveloped. Its steepness; compact and complex undulating contours; and jigsaw of interweaving small to medium fields give it depth of character. It is a perfect example of the visual harmony and undeveloped hillside attributes of the WHS setting. The assessment fields are a part of that whole and as such are highly susceptible to any development.</p> <p>Overall Sensitivity: High</p>
Magnitude of Effects	High Development either in all or part of these fields would have a magnitude of effect which extends over a much wider area than the site itself being so out of character in this part of the valley side.
Significance of Landscape Effects:	High and negative in effect
<i>Visual Effects</i>	
Relevant Key Aspects of Significance Assessed	General views to and across Weston valley; Key Georgian viewpoints (Beckford's Tower).
Sensitivity (value + susceptibility to change caused by development effects)	<p><i>WHS Setting Value:</i> Medium to High <i>Susceptibility</i> To change caused by estate type development: High The fields are viewed from Lansdown Lane, from Beckford's Tower, from the open access land below Beckford's Tower. They are an integral part of the view of the beautiful views of the undeveloped valley side. Development would draw the eye and reduce all of that.</p> <p>Overall Sensitivity: High</p>
Magnitude of Effects	Development either in all or part of these fields would have a magnitude of effect in the view, which extends over a much wider area than the site itself being so out of character in this part of the valley side.
Significance of Visual Effects	High and negative in effect
<i>Historical Association Effects</i>	
Relevant Key Aspects of Significance Assessed	No known key WHS historical associations

5. AONB Assessment

Relevant Key Aspects of Significance	Escarpment views; Tranquillity, Accessibility
Sensitivity (value + susceptibility to change caused by development effects)	<p><i>Value:</i> High</p> <p><i>Susceptibility</i> To change caused by estate type development: High This part of the valley has a very tranquil feel overall, even close to the housing there is a sense of remoteness which comes from the close relationship with the undeveloped countryside of the valley side. Housing here would probably not bring with it much more noise after the building phase but it would bring the busyness of built form into the otherwise natural and calm landscape; and light pollution to contaminate the slopes at night. It would also enclose the PROW as it emerges into the open landscape. Overall the susceptibility to development especially from loss of tranquillity, is high.</p> <p>Overall Sensitivity: High</p>
Magnitude of Effects	<p>High</p> <p>Development either in all or part of these fields would have a magnitude of effect in terms of loss of tranquillity, which extends over a much wider area than the site itself especially so because of the compact nature and steepness of slope and also because of the impact it has on reducing the tranquillity of views from across the valley.</p>
Significance of Effects	High and negative in effect

