

Land East of A465, Abergavenny

Landscape Study for site promotion

August 2021

MHP DESIGN LTD – CHARTERED LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS - MASTERPLANNERS - ARBORICULTURALISTS

1	INTRODUCTION	3
2	LANDSCAPE POLICY CONTEXT	6
3	LANDSCAPE BASELINE	11
4	VISUAL BASELINE.....	18
5	CONCLUSION AND RECCOMENDATIONS	24

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 MHP Design Ltd Chartered Landscape Architects were instructed by Monmouthshire Housing Association to undertake a landscape and visual review of the land within Candidate Site CS0125, land east of A465, Abergavenny.

1.2 Aims and Scope of Study

1.2.1 This study aims to provide an overview of the key landscape and visual sensitivities of the site to inform the design approach as part of promoting the site for potential future residential development. The study makes recommendations for enhancement of Green Infrastructure and mitigation. Refer to MHP Design Ltd Green Infrastructure drawing 19068.101. The site covered within this study includes some parts of land beyond the control of the Monmouthshire Housing Associations red line however they have been left in the assessment to provide context.

1.2.2 A site visit, including a visit to nearby visual receptors was undertaken by two chartered landscape architects during August 2019 during fine weather permitting clear views. Photographs from these locations are included within this study.

1.2.3 The following published resources have been consulted for guidance and background information:

- White Consultants Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity study undertaken in 2009
- Monmouthshire Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance adopted 2015
- National Character Area NCA 31 Central Monmouthshire
- LANDMAP A19

1.3 Landscape Study Methodology

1.3.1 The study has been undertaken with regard to the following best practice:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), Third Edition (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment)

1.3.2 The landscape study work has been undertaken in two phases; desk top studies followed by site studies involving visiting the site and the surrounding areas.

1.3.3 The desktop study involves gathering baseline data from published Landscape Character Assessment documents, Planning Documents, GIS mapping, OS maps and aerial photographs to identify existing landscape features and context including:

- Topography
- Settlement boundaries
- Flood Zones
- Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens
- Local Plan designations relating to landscape.
- Ancient Woodland
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- National Character Areas
- District Landscape Character Types and Areas
- Public rights of way

1.3.4 The field assessment involves a chartered landscape architect visiting the site and local area to identify key characteristics and key receptors including:

- Natural features and elements such as topography, hydrology, land cover
- Cultural and social aspects such as land use, historic landscape features and relationship to settlement and built structures.
- Aesthetic and Perceptual aspects such as scale, openness, tranquillity, naturalness, and remoteness
- Condition of the landscape elements and features
- Visual characteristics such as scenic quality, intervisibility, characteristic views, focal points, visual detractors
- Visual receptors; People at scenic viewing locations, walkers, Cyclists, Road users, Occupants of houses, People at their place of work, People using indoor/outdoor community facilities.

1.4 Landscape and Visual Assessment Criteria

- 1.4.1 Landscape and visual **sensitivity** are determined by combining judgements of the **susceptibility** of the receptor to the proposed change and the **value** of the receptor. The assessment criteria for each are based on a scale of High, Medium-high, Medium, Medium-Low, Low or Negligible.

1.5 The Study Site

- 1.5.1 The study site is located immediately adjacent to the A465 Hereford Road, east of Abergavenny Town. The land borders the road to the west and open countryside and wooded upper slopes associated with Little Skirrid to the east. Beyond the boundary to the south is the land associated with Coldbrook Park, a Historic Park and Gardens. The northern boundary is formed by the B4233 minor road which runs the length of the site boundary in this location.
- 1.5.2 The site consists of a number of open fields, predominantly pasture, separated by low cut hedgerow and well treed boundaries associated with watercourses. The site occupies the western lower to mid slopes of Little Skirrid (Ysgyryd Fach) which at its summit is just over 270m partially covered by woodland and conifer plantation. The hill is known as one of the seven hills of Abergavenny. Landform is sloping east to west, from approximately 150m AOD at its highest point to 70m AOD where it adjoins the highway. There are two distinct well vegetated stream corridors which dissect the site east to west situated north and south of the site, dividing the site into three parcels.

1.6 The Proposed Development

- 1.6.1 In the current absence of a detailed proposal, this study is based on a development scenario of up to 635 new dwellings and open space, following the principles set by Hammond Architects Ltd Land Use Framework Plan, August 2021.

2 LANDSCAPE POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

2.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the governments planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied for future development. At the heart of the NPPF is 'a presumption in favour of sustainable development'.

2.1.2 Paragraphs of the NPPF, 'Conserving and Enhancing the Natural environment' provide relevant guidance, that proposals:

- Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment including valued landscapes

2.1.3 A summary of national and local planning landscape designations in relation to the site are as follows:

Greenbelt	No.
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	No.
National Park	No. The Brecon Beacons National Park is located to the north and east and beyond the settlement edge of Abergavenny town.
World Heritage Site	No. Blaenavon World Heritage site is located south west beyond Llanfoist.
Historic Parks and Garden	None on site. Cold Brook Park Historic Park and Gardens are further to the south. The site boundary is not immediately adjoining the park and gardens and the site does not fall within the

	land associated within the 'Parks and Gardens essential settings' designation
Listed buildings	None on site
Conservation Area	None on site
Open access land	No
Public rights of way	A number of footpaths cross the site

2.2 Monmouthshire Council Local Landscape Character Sensitivity and Capacity Study 2009

- 2.2.1 In 2009 White consultants published a Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity study for the land surrounding Abergavenny for the Monmouthshire Local Plan.
- 2.2.2 The proposed site lies across three land parcels classified by the study. The majority of the site is included in area LLCA A19 which extends further to include land to the west that comprises Little Skirrid.
- 2.2.3 LLCA A18 to the south includes the southern portion of the site which adjoins the stream corridor. The majority of this areas falls with Coldbrook Park, Historic Park and Gardens
- 2.2.4 LLCA A03 includes the land to north beyond the stream corridor and adjoining the B4233 highway. The majority of this LLCA includes the land to the north beyond the site.
- 2.2.5 The study states that landscape sensitivity is assessed to vary across the LLCA's from High/Medium in parcel A18 and in parcel A03 and High within parcel LLCA A19. Refer to Figure 10.
- 2.2.6 The Monmouthshire Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity and Study (2009) also provides an assessment of housing capacity for land parcels A03, A18 and A19. The study provides the following commentary:

- Sensitivity to Housing Capacity A03: The capacity is low due to the open countryside, parkland and rural character of the area with two rising slopes towards the prominent hills in the northern part of the National Park.
- Sensitivity to Housing Capacity A18: The capacity is low due to the open countryside, parkland and rural character of the area with two rising slopes towards the prominent hills in the northern part of the National Park.
- Sensitivity to Housing Capacity A19: The capacity is low due to its prominence, the open countryside and rural character of the area.

2.2.7 The Monmouthshire landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study assessment identifies the following sensitivities which relate to the three land parcels (A03, A18 & A19) part of which the study site covers.

- The sensitivity of the area is high/medium because it is separated from Abergavenny by the A465 and railway line.
- The sensitivity of Little Skirrid, including the central portion of the study site is high because it is a prominent and distinct hill which acts as a distinct backcloth to Abergavenny with views from Castle Meadows

2.2.8 The Monmouthshire Study reviewed 19 sites; the proposed site covers part of 3 of them. The proposed site in context with the other sites is comparable in terms of sensitivity and capacity. There are 4 sites classed as High sensitivity; the central part of the study site falls within this rating. All the other sites are rated as High/Medium sensitivity, including the northern and southern parts of the proposed site. No sites were identified as being lower than High/medium sensitivity. Twelve of the sites are classed as having low capacity to accommodate housing; this includes the three parcels covering the proposal site. Other sites were rated as Medium/low capacity with only two sites rated as Medium capacity.

2.3 Monmouthshire Council Adopted Local Development Plan, February 2014

2.3.1 In 2009 White consultants published a Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity study for the land surrounding Abergavenny for the Monmouthshire Local Plan. Part of the study recommended the landscape outside of the Brecon Beacons National Park be designated Special Landscape Area. In 2014 the Local Plan changed removed this designation in favour of policy LC5 Protection and Enhancement of Local Character.

2.3.2 Policy LC5 seeks to ensure that proposals for development protect, conserve and, where possible, enhance Monmouthshire's landscape character:

Policy LC5: Development proposals that would impact upon landscape character, as defined by LANDMAP Landscape Character Assessment, must demonstrate through a landscape assessment how landscape character has influenced their design, scale, nature and site selection.

Development will be permitted provided it would not have an unacceptable adverse effect on the special character or quality of Monmouthshire's landscape in terms of its visual, historic, geological, ecological or cultural aspects by:

- a) Causing significant visual intrusion;*
- b) Causing significant adverse change in the character of the built or natural landscape;*
- c) Being insensitively and unsympathetically sited within the landscape;*
- d) Introducing or intensifying a use which is incompatible with its location;*
- e) Failing to harmonise with, or enhance the landform and landscape; and /or*
- f) Losing or failing to incorporate important traditional features, patterns, structures and layout of settlements and landscapes of both the built and natural environment.*

Particular emphasis will be given to those landscapes identified through the LANDMAP Landscape Character Assessment as being of high and outstanding quality because of a certain landscape quality or combination of qualities.

2.4 Summary of landscape policy and designations

- 2.4.1 The site is not protected nationally by statutory AONB, National Park or World Heritage site designations. The site is not within a 1 in 100 year flood zone. The site is not specifically protected by local landscape designation. The site is crossed by three public rights of way (Refer to **Figure 1**). The site is not within the Historic Park and Gardens or within its essential setting (see to **Figure 9**). There are no known statutory ecological or heritage assets on the site.
- 2.4.2 In summary, it is noted from the Monmouthshire Study that the other sites rated as being of lower sensitivity and medium capacity for housing are strongly constrained by flood zones, protected by International and National landscape designations (National Park and World Heritage Site) and are within the Historic Parks and Gardens site and setting.
- 2.4.3 Policy LC5 applies requiring there be no significantly adverse landscape effects on landscapes judged as high and outstanding by LANDMAP.

3 LANDSCAPE BASELINE

3.1 Scope of Assessment

3.1.1 The site occupies a moderate area and the following landscape receptors have been included for assessment:

- National Character Area NCA 31 Central Monmouthshire
- LANDMAP A19

3.2 NCA31 National Landscape Character Central Monmouthshire:

3.2.1 The Key characteristics of the Central Monmouthshire national character area are as follows:

- Silurian mudstones and shales surrounded by a large band of earlier, Devonian Old Red Sandstone
- An area of gently rolling hills, intervening valleys and the Usk flood plain.
- Morainic deposits and fertile alluvial flood plains aligning with geological faults, especially to the north. Post-glacial alluvium across the Usk flood plain.
- The Usk, the main watercourse, flows south from Abergavenny and eventually becomes tidal. Rivers Trothy and Monnow in the north feed into the Wye in the adjacent character area to the east. Their alignments are influenced by geological faults.
- Hedge-bound fields are mainly given to sheep grazing and dairying, with areas of arable farming on the fertile floodplain.
- Woodlands and mixed plantations cover many slopes and hill tops in parts of the area.
- Mixed habitats, notably mixed broadleaved woodlands containing a variety of rare tree species and are important habitats, as is the open water of the Llandegfedd Reservoir - a key site for overwintering birds.
- Small nucleated hamlets and villages are scattered throughout the area, linked by a network of winding rural lanes. Medieval stone churches are characteristic of the villages.
- The historic market town of Abergavenny sits on the banks of the Usk in the west of the area, against the striking backdrop of the Blorenge and Sugar Loaf Mountain.
- Grosmont, Skenfrith, White, Raglan and Usk castles are distinctive monuments and witnesses to the area's contested past.

- The sheltered landscape has a peaceful rural character, with any significant modern intrusion confined to the road corridors of the A40 and A 449.

3.3 LANDMAP A19:

3.3.1 Due to its size, the site falls within and across a number of LANDMAP aspect areas. Aspect areas values for A19 which forms most of the study site and the whole of Little Skirrid hill are stated below and provides a general overview of the LANDMAP ratings:

- Geological landscapes – High
- Landscape Habitats – Moderate
- Historical Landscapes – Moderate
- Cultural Landscapes – Outstanding
- Visual and Sensory – High
- Visual and Sensory Sensitivity – High

3.4 Study Site Landscape Resources:

3.4.1 In addition to a review of the National and Local Landscape Character Assessments, site specific work has been undertaken to identify individual landscape elements and their patterns across the site. The findings are as follows:

Natural Features & Elements:

3.4.2 Landform; Moderately sloping pasture fields associated with Little Skirrid. Western portion of the landform adjacent to the road is gently sloping and less prominent. Upper slopes towards the wooded top of the hill are more steeply sloping

3.4.3 Hydrology; Two distinct well treed stream watercourses are situated to the north and south which divide the wider study site into three land parcels. Watercourses are cut into the hill creating deep cuttings which run east to west towards the road. Field ditches are present

along some hedgerow corridors, the Ordnance Survey mapping indicates several springs/watercourses run east to west across the site.

- 3.4.4 Vegetation; Established native trees form dense and robust green infrastructure corridors to the north and south of the site. These corridors include mature age larger oak and ash trees with smaller, hawthorn, holly and field maple forming an established lower canopy layer.
- 3.4.5 There are some large and established specimen trees within fields on the lower slopes, particularly within the northern field parcels beyond the stream corridor. Large established ornamental trees form the setting and wider gardens for Caederwen House in the central northern portion of the site.
- 3.4.6 The remainder of the site includes native species low cut hedgerows with occasional mature large established hedgerow trees which form irregular field patterns on the lower slopes of the hill. Field boundary hedges are weak and degraded in some locations.
- 3.4.7 Beyond the site boundary on the upper slopes and top of Little Skirrid are stands of coniferous woodland which form a characteristic feature when viewed in the wider landscape.

Cultural and Social Aspects:

- 3.4.8 Land use: Agricultural land use with mixed pastoral and equestrian uses. Some outdoor features relating to equestrian use, ménage and stable buildings present in fields further to the north. Expansive grounds/garden associated with the large property in the central northern area of the site.
- 3.4.9 Features are predominantly simple and rural with existing mature trees and stream corridors adding to a sense of time depth. The undeveloped nature of the site is almost always experienced in conjunction with noise and movement associated with the railway and road. Modern settlement features of the adjoining town are never far away, particularly in the lower fields adjoining the highway

3.4.10 Part intact but decaying in places. Some field hedges or boundaries have been removed in the larger more open fields creating larger parcels for farming.

3.4.11 A small number of public rights of way cross the site providing informal walking routes

Aesthetic and Perceptual:

3.4.12 The eastern portion of the site is open and elevated agricultural pasture, unremarkable in relation to its context but exposed to clear scenic views to and from the surrounding elevated landform and areas within the town. Tranquillity increases in this location and towards the wooded slopes associated with the top of Little Skirrid.

3.4.13 The western portion of the site is lower lying and more enclosed with substantial influence from noise and movement from the adjoining highway. There is a lower sense of remoteness in these locations and the site in this location is not tranquil.

3.4.14 There is currently limited physical relationship to the main settlement due to severance of the road and railway to the west. There is a relationship to the more scattered residential dwellings across the site (5 dwellings in total). The land parcel is not remote and is within close proximity to Abergavenny town but lacks physical connectivity. Pedestrian footbridge to the north crosses the railway which links to residential areas of the town. B4233 underpass links to the northern portion of the site.

Condition of Landscape:

3.4.15 The hedges are in moderate condition with both good and weak hedges present. Some weak boundaries which are gappy or missing. Good hedgerow has strong stands of hawthorn, hazel, ash field maple and holly and mature hedgerow trees. The fields of pasture are improved and semi improved grass. Built form associated with existing farms are in moderate condition.

3.4.16 The trees, predominantly ash and oak in moderate and good condition generally. Willow is present around watercourses and more ornamental species within proximity to the large house towards the central northern area of the site.

3.5 Landscape Baseline Analysis

- 3.5.1 The following judgements have been made regarding the susceptibility of the landscape receptors and their value. The values of these larger landscape receptors range from Low to High based on where designations lie, so an average judgement has been made. Overall a rating of **Medium** has been applied judging the sensitivity of the site to the proposed development. This study does not examine the magnitude of change likely to occur or therefore the significance of the effects. Higher sensitivity receptors do not always mean no development can occur however it is a guide to the amount and type of development and need for good green infrastructure to both mitigate and enhance.
- 3.5.2 The landscape character of the site and its sensitivities are borne partly from its current undeveloped nature and its rising landform. However, despite this being a rural landscape, urbanising features and settlement features are within close proximity. These urbanising features of the town have greatest influence over the western portion of the site where the lower and more gently sloping fields are within proximity of the A465 highway and mainline railway.
- 3.5.3 The stream corridors of the site, situated to the north and south, are prominent landscape features which create physical, visual and logical division of the land parcels within the site. Whilst the character of the separated parcels are similar in nature the separation provided by the well treed watercourses creates an opportunity for development of varied character in relation to an approach to future development of the site.
- 3.5.4 The site features are simple and relatively unremarkable in their own right but do reflect the local rural landscape characteristics. Condition of these features is mixed but assessed to be moderate in slight decline. Existing mature trees are in moderate condition and provide a contribution to the sites existing green infrastructure. Pasture fields are characteristic of the wider landscape character and pattern which is prolific in relation to its context

Landscape Sensitivity				
Landscape receptor	Susceptibility	Value	Notes	Overall sensitivity
Central Monmouthshire	Medium-low	Medium-High	Site forms a small part of the NCA within which some highly valuable landscapes exist including heritage sites and national parks.	Medium
LANDMAP A19	Medium - high	High	Values range from predominantly moderate and high with one outstanding value for the cultural aspects relating to the whole of little Skirrid hill.	Medium-high
Natural elements and features of the site	Medium-low	Medium	The natural features of the site can largely be retained and there are opportunities for landscape enhancements.	Medium
Cultural and social elements of the site	Low	Medium-low	Few cultural or social elements on site.	Low
Aesthetic and perceptual elements of the site	Medium-high	High	The scenic value of the hill is not protected at a national level. The proposal occupies the lower slopes of the hill and would reduce but not remove all enjoyment of the hill.	Medium-high

Condition of the site landscape as a whole	Low	Medium-low	Very good opportunities for landscape enhancements; hedges, trees and spring lines in particular.	Medium-low
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4 VISUAL BASELINE

4.1 Scope of Study Area and visual context

4.1.1 The site is moderately open and upper parts of the sloping site is available in views due to its elevation in relation to the town. The treed highways corridor associated with the A456 to the west provides containment to the lower portions of the site which is generally obscured from views from longer distances at Castle Meadows Park and along the eastern edge of the town by dense vegetation. This established vegetation also corresponds to the lower lying land within the site enhancing the sense of containment to the lower fields. The higher areas of the site are quite open although the substantial green corridors associated with the watercourses that traverse the site limit and contain views both into and out from the site.

4.1.2 Visual receptors were identified from maps, aerial photos, designations and site work. The main visual receptors identified are as follows:

Key views from within the site:

4.1.3 From higher elevations on Public Rights of Way crossing the land views are available towards prominent local landform including Sugar Loaf, The Skirrid, Blorengge and landmark buildings within the town

Key views into the site:

4.1.4 The key views identified, from site work, into the site are as follows:

- From Open Access Land on Blorengge to the west, Castle Meadows park and Usk Bridge.
- From the public accessible areas along the mid slopes of Sugar Loaf within the Mardy area of Abergavenny
- Elevated longer distance views from upper elevations of Sugar Loaf and the Skirrid to the north.

Skyline:

- 4.1.5 The more elevated portions of the central portion of the site are readily identifiable forming a backdrop in views from Castle Meadows Park. The greatest visibility of the site tend to be above the 120m contour line where a hedge marks the extent of the proposals. The distinctive upper slopes and summit of Little Skirrid remains as a feature on the Skyline.

Intervisibility / openness / enclosure:

- 4.1.6 Generally open pasture throughout but with greater openness within the larger land parcels to the north and south associated with the fields beyond the stream corridors and on more elevated landform. Smaller fields have a sense of enclosure where boundaries are well treed. Public rights of way which follow watercourses are enclosed by well-established trees limiting local views within the site

Visual detractors:

- 4.1.7 Small scale telephone and electricity wire/pylons traverse some of the lower slopes. Some groundworks; cut and fill at the top of the site where grass has not re-established create a detractor.

4.2 Visual Receptors, Viewpoints and Views

Walkers of public right of way footpath:

- 4.2.1 Represented by viewpoint photograph 2. At lower elevations walkers experience limited views across the site due to hedge boundaries and trees obscuring views out beyond the immediate site boundaries. Walkers experience moderate distance expansive views out from higher elevations towards prominent local landforms, Blorenge, The Skirrid and Sugar Loaf and landmark buildings within Abergavenny

Walkers within open access land associated with the Bloreng:

- 4.2.2 Represented by viewpoint photograph 5. Walkers experience open and expansive views from the north eastern tip of the hill when looking north towards Abergavenny Town. Elevated views of much of the land parcel are seen in the context of the Town which forms the foreground of the view.

Walkers within Castle Meadows and Usk Bridge:

- 4.2.3 Represented by viewpoint photograph 3. Walkers experience open views of little Skirrid and the site from the northern end of the park within proximity and on the footpath at Usk Bridge. Lower elevated portions of the site are not visible due to substantial layers of boundary vegetation of both the park and the transport corridor associated with the A465 highway. The trees on the upper portion of the hill beyond the site boundary form the skyline in views from these locations.

Walkers using public rights of way on elevated land to the north of Abergavenny:

- 4.2.4 Represented by viewpoint photograph 4. Medium to longer distance views of the northern and central portion of the site are visible from public rights of way in this location. The well treed nature of the site in this location limits visibility of the entire site, particularly beyond the southern most stream corridor and towards Coldbrook Park.

Walkers within open access land/public right of way on Sugar Loaf and The Skirrid:

- 4.2.5 Views towards the site will be visible from the open access areas of the Sugar Loaf and the Skirrid. Long distance, elevated and open views are likely to be seen in the context of Abergavenny town. Southern land parcels are less likely to be visible from these locations due to dense vegetation and trees associated with the stream corridors.

4.3 Summary of Visual Baseline Analysis

- 4.3.1 The upper sections of the two southernmost footpaths afford scenic views both into and within the fields of the site itself up to the wooded tops of little Skirrid and also out towards Abergavenny Town and local landmark hills. These views are not unique or rare but are local valued for their scenic and attractive values and should be retained and enhanced within proposed development. Maintaining a rural setting to footpaths and intervisibility with the wider landscape and in particular the local hills of the Sugar Loaf, Skirrid and Blorengé should be integral to any proposals for development of the site.
- 4.3.2 Views into the land parcel from the elevated viewpoints along the surrounding landscape including Blorengé, The Skirrid and Sugar Loaf are scenic and inform the setting to the town which is often viewed in the context of the site itself. The site itself has limited features which becoming less distinct when seen from these distant elevated viewpoints.
- 4.3.3 Views towards the site from Castle Meadows which comprise much of the more elevated portion of the centre of the site. Lower fields are less visible and are hidden from view by the layers of vegetation associated with the town and the A465 highway
- 4.3.4 Maintaining the rural vale character of the upper slopes of the hill as seen in elevated views from local landmarks should be treated as a constraint to development. Maintaining 'green' footpath setting and views to the local landscape from site public rights of way is also important.
- 4.3.5 Broadly speaking, visual sensitivities vary within individual fields within the lower western portion of the site, which are less prominent when views from its surrounding context. These visual sensitivities, which broadly increase further to the west of the site, do not completely preclude the site from development but will limit the extent to which built form should extend towards the upper slopes of the hill.

Visual Sensitivity				
Visual receptor	Susceptibility	Value	Notes	Overall sensitivity
Walkers using the two footpaths across the site	High	High	Footpaths not heavily used due to difficulty in getting across A365; poor pedestrian connectivity reduces their use. Opportunities to improve.	High
Walkers on the Bloreng	Medium-high	High	Site seen in context with settlement. Other residential areas of the town do occupy lower slopes of surrounding hills, such as Mardy. The 120m contours tend to mark the general maximum extent of development within the town. The proposals do not exceed this contour.	Medium-high
Walkers of Castle Meadows and Usk bridge	Medium	High	Views from within meadow are inward looking towards river with backdrop of the hills around town, inc little skirted. Proposals would occupy lower slopes of hill, prominence of hill of skyline would remain intact.	Medium-high
Walkers using footpaths on elevated ground north of Abergavenny	Medium-low	High	Lower number of receptors likely to use local footpaths. Views from footpaths on the hills around Abergavenny all	Medium

			tend to be long distant panoramic of the town in a basin with the 7 hills around.	
Walkers on Skirrid and Sugar Loaf	Low	High	Panormaic views across the whole of the town to hills beyond. Site forms a small part of the view and seen in context with built form of settlement.	Medium-low
Motorists using A365 main road	Medium	Medium-Low	This is from where the majority of receptors will view the site, at speed from vehicles.	Medium

4.3.6 The following judgements have been made regarding the susceptibility of the visual receptors and their value. The values of these larger landscape receptors range from Low to High based on where designations lie, so an average judgement has been made. Overall a rating of **Medium to Medium-high** has been applied judging the visual sensitivity of the site to the proposed development. This study does not examine the magnitude of change likely to occur or therefore the significance of the effects. Higher sensitivity receptors do not always mean no development can occur however it is a guide to the amount and type of development and need for good green infrastructure to both mitigate and enhance.

5 CONCLUSION AND RECCOMENDATIONS

5.1.1 Overall a rating of **Medium to Medium-high** has been applied to describe the visual sensitivity to the proposed development. A rating of **Medium** has been applied to describe the landscape sensitivity to the proposed development. This study does not examine the magnitude of change likely to occur or therefore the significance of the effects. Higher sensitivity receptors do not always mean no development can occur however it is a guide to the amount and type of development and need for good green infrastructure to both mitigate and enhance. It is likely that moderately adverse effects will likely be experienced, at this stage significantly adverse effects are not expected; this would need to be tested through a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

5.1.2 It is recommended that a design approach working with the landscape constraints and string GI could accommodate some development on the site where there is a need for housing. The availability of local landscape features such as woodland and general tree cover provides characteristic landscape opportunities for enhancement that also provide visual mitigation to help integrate the proposals into the landscape. The accompanying **Figure 8** provides an initial zoning of the site with regards to landscape and visual sensitivities and opportunities. Refer to MHP Design Ltd drawing 19068.101 Green Infrastructure Strategy Plan.

5.1.3 A summary of landscape constraints in relation to residential development of the site are identified as follows:

- Maintain and enhance the existing Green Infrastructure stream corridors that cross the site to the north and south
- Maintain existing valuable trees and hedgerows integrating them into areas of public open space
- Maintain a green setting to the existing Public Rights of Way that pass through the site
- Maintain a green setting and character to the wider Special Landscape Area and adjoining Historic Park and Gardens to the south
- Maintain the sense of transition and openness from the lower slopes of Little Skirrid to the well wooded top beyond the site boundary.

5.1.4 A summary of visual constraints for the site are as follows:

- Maintain the wider character of the town in longer distance views from surrounding viewpoints by restricting built form towards the more open elevated fields to the west of the site. It was noted that land above the 120m contour became much more visible with steeper gradients than land below it.
- Maintain intervisibility with the existing public rights of way that pass through the site with the landmark buildings within the town and local prominent landform.

5.1.5 Mitigation measures are both inherent through spatial and architectural design and by the provision of strategic new green infrastructure which has the potential to contain or limit significant character change or potential adverse effects from development within the site. These measures are set out in summary below and considered as the starting point for the approach to potential development of the wider site for housing.

5.1.6 Opportunities:

- Create a 'seamless' urban extension to town through the creation of multifunctional green corridors.
- Improve public footpath and create cycle links between Little Skirrid and Abergavenny Town
- Extend and enhance existing Green Infrastructure in accordance with the principles set out in the Monmouthshire Green Infrastructure SPG which should include provision for multiuse open space, orchards, woodland and productive landscapes.
- Working with site topography, integrate a sustainable approach to surface water management (SuDS) creating opportunity for biodiversity net gain and site enhancement through habitat creation.

5.1.7 Potential mitigation through layout design:

- Density and distribution of buildings. Lower density, lower roof heights and green roofs in areas of higher sensitivity to the east towards the more elevated slopes.
- Height and prominence of buildings should be limited at the interface with the open countryside, particularly on elevated land.

- Settlement character variation, with higher density urban character in the western, lower areas of the site associated with the highway corridor and lower density, rural character development along margins, preserving character of the wider Special Landscape Area.
- Provision of strategic open space to maintain and achieve intervisibility from site footpaths to the wider landscape and help break the massing of development of views into the site.

5.1.8 Potential mitigation through green infrastructure:

- Retention of important existing green infrastructure to protect existing habitats and provide landscape anchors for providing new green infrastructure
- Creation of informal character to proposed new green infrastructure to reflect the rural character and enhance potential for new habitat creation and biodiversity net gain.
- Strategic green infrastructure to augment the existing highway's corridor associated with the A465 Hereford Road. This can create a green spine for sustainable transport means creating a strong link with the town and existing railway station.
- Strategic green infrastructure along all site boundaries where they are adjoining open countryside to link existing green infrastructure and maintain separation with Coldbrook Park to the south
- Create undeveloped greenways through the development utilising existing green infrastructure assets to inform a coherent strategy for sustainable development and climate change resilience through sustainable management of land and water resources.

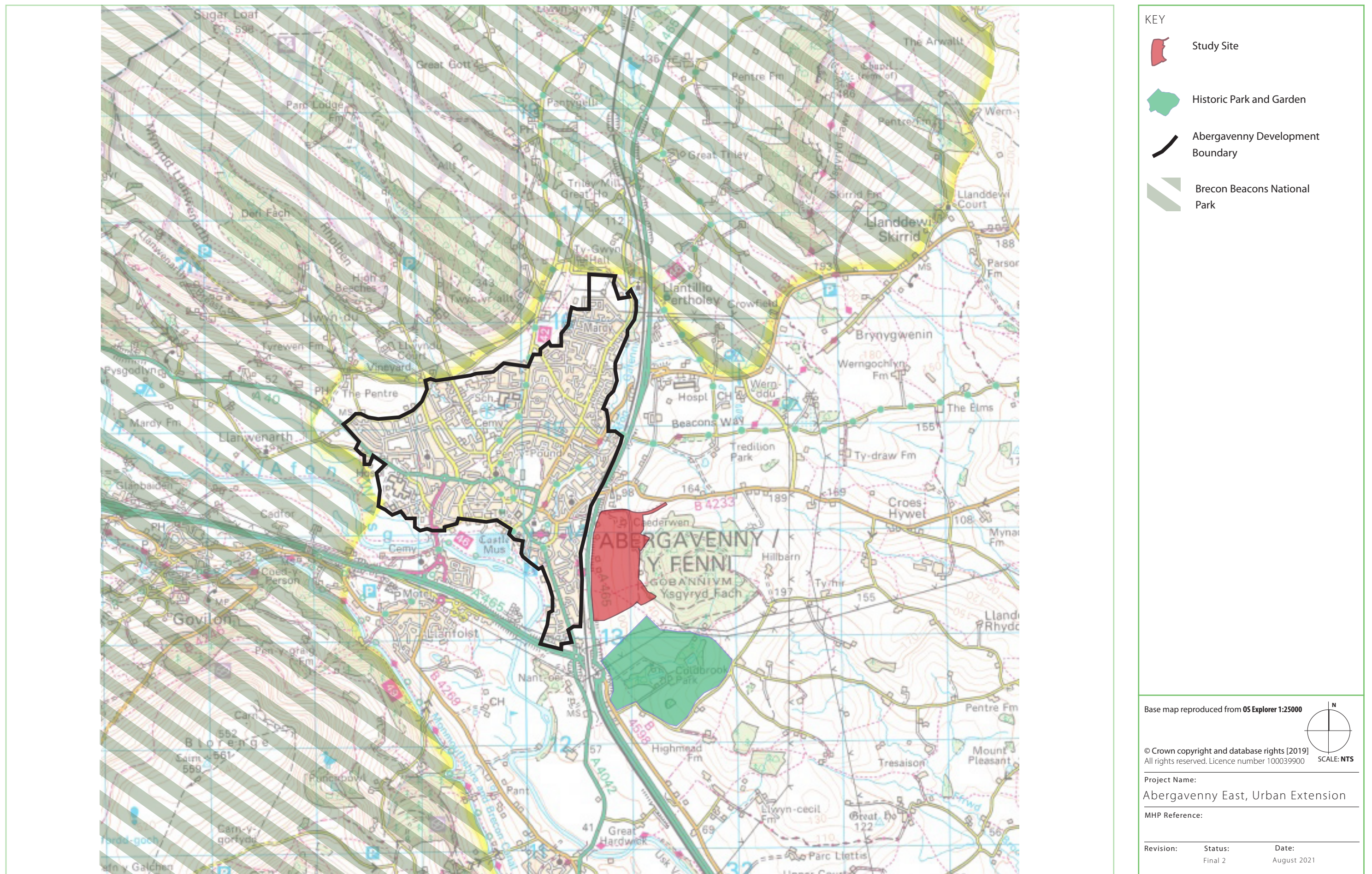


Figure 1 Landscape Designations
19068 Abergavenny East, Urban Extension

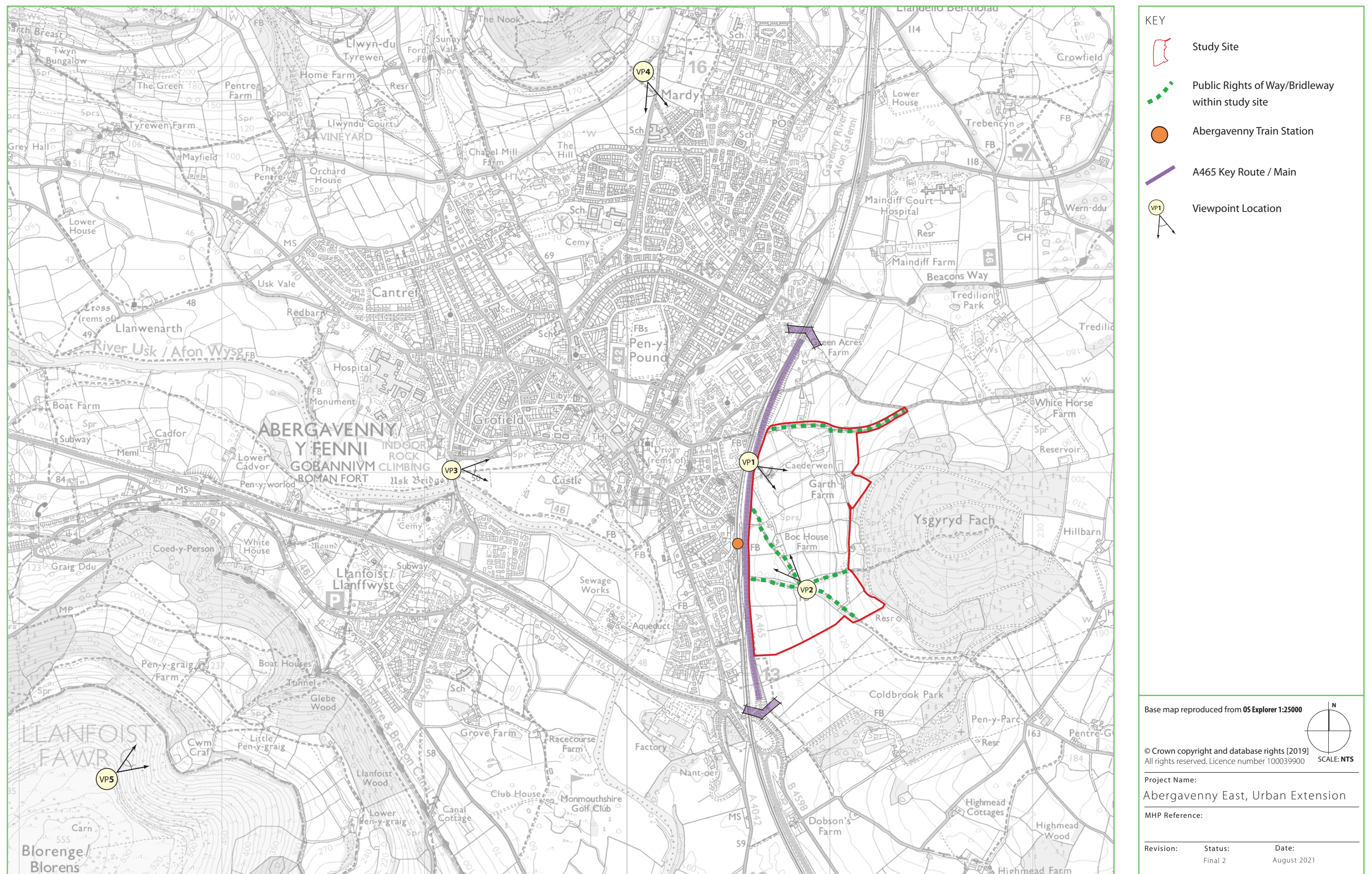
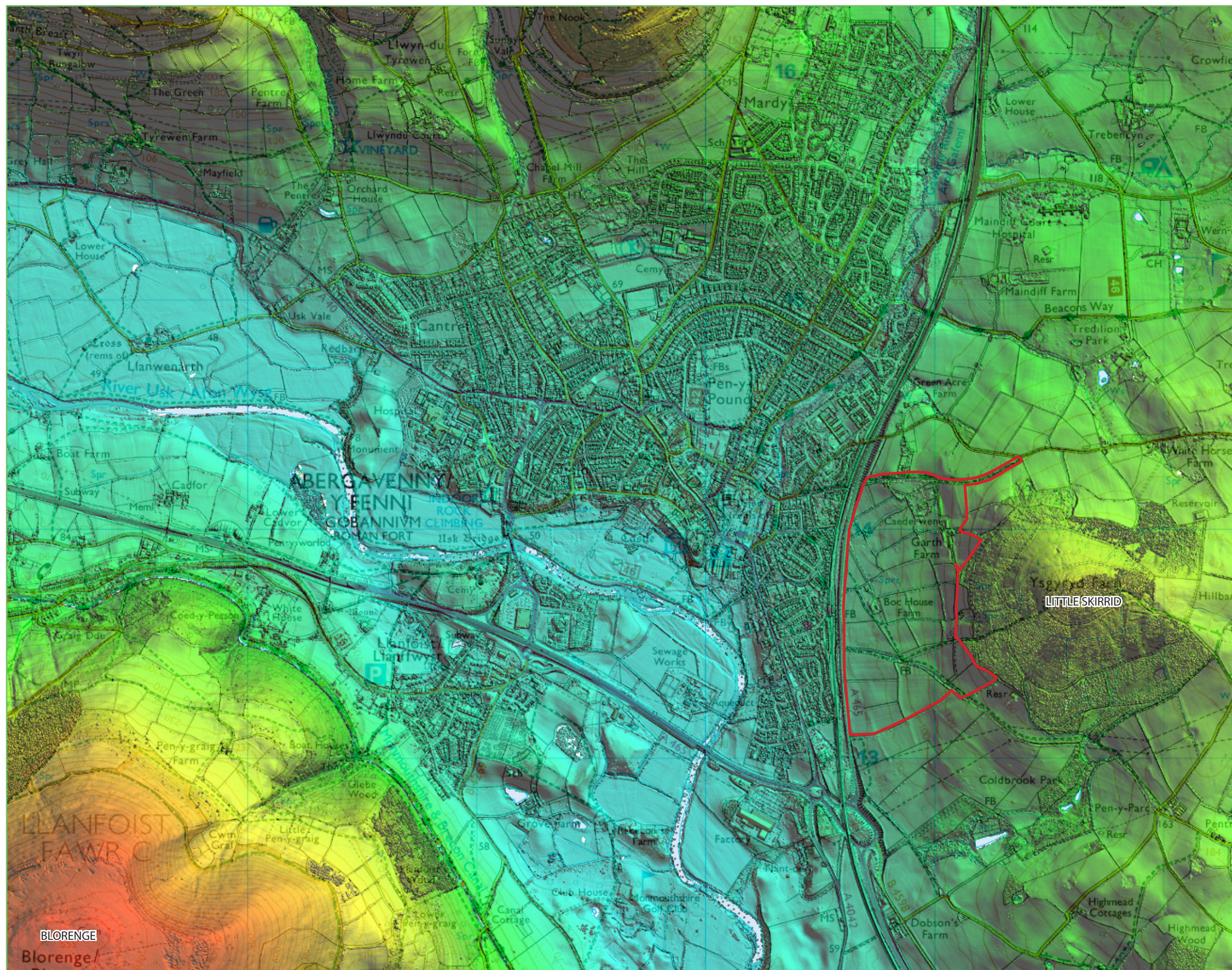


Figure 2 Site Location, Context, Viewpoint Locations
19068 Abergavenny East, Urban Extension



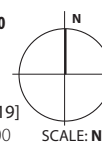
KEY



Study Site

Base map reproduced from OS Explorer 1:25000

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Project Name:
Abergavenny East, Urban Extension

MHP Reference:

Revision:	Status:	Date:
	Final 2	August 2021

Figure 3 Topographic Context Plan
19068 Abergavenny East, Urban Extension

Agricultural buildings
associated with Garth Farm

Hedge line marks approximately
Eastern extent of development

Little Skirrid
Farmhouse

Viewpoint Photograph 1



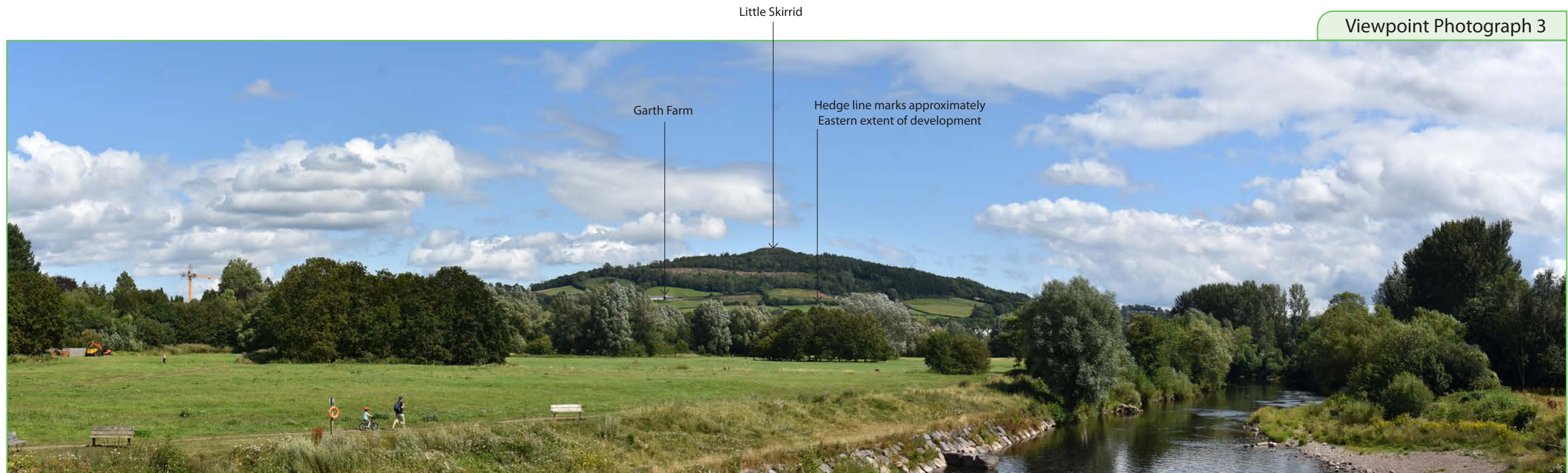
View looking east towards little Skirrid from lay-by on A465

Full extent of panorama, taken 07/08/19
This is a composite image made up of a number of 50mm photographs joined together horizontally to form
an overall field of view which is wider than seen in detail by the human eye.



View looking north west from Public Right of Way with study site towards Abergavenny Town and Sugar Loaf

Full extent of panorama, taken 07/08/19
This is a composite image made up of a number of 50mm photographs joined together horizontally to form an overall field of view which is wider than seen in detail by the human eye.



View looking east towards little Skirrid from Usk Bridge/Castle Meadow

Full extent of panorama, taken 07/08/19
This is a composite image made up of a number of 50mm photographs joined together horizontally to form an overall field of view which is wider than seen in detail by the human eye.

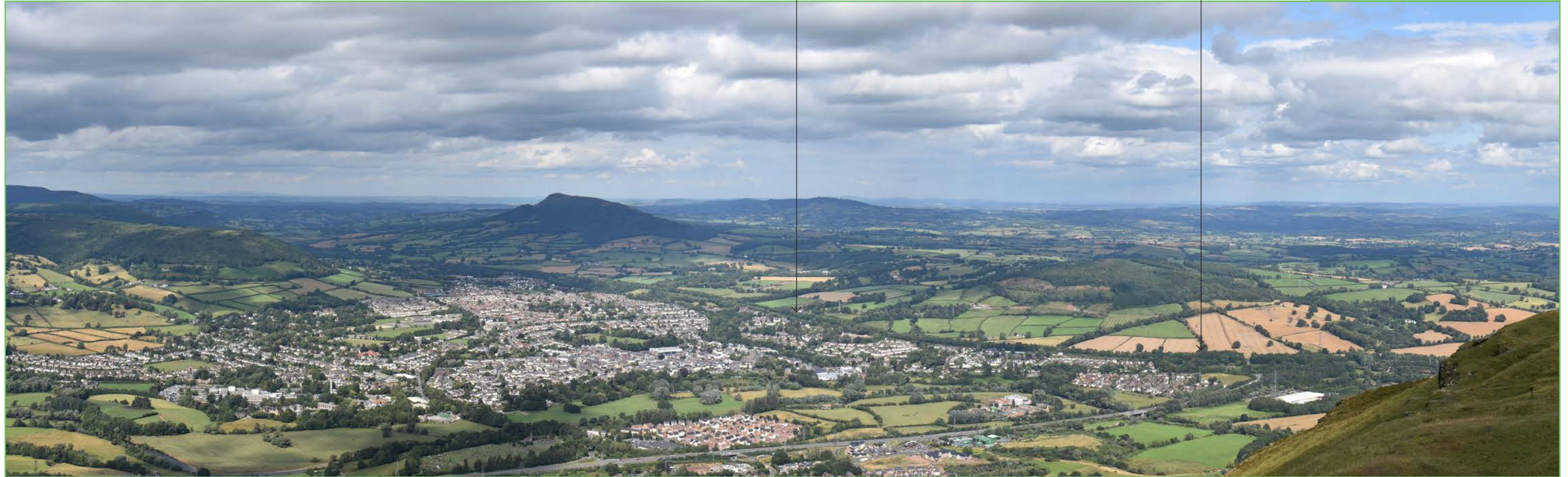


View looking south from Public Right of Way north of Abergavenny Town at Mardy

Full extent of panorama, taken 07/08/19
This is a composite image made up of a number of 50mm photographs joined together horizontally to form an overall field of view which is wider than seen in detail by the human eye.

Study Site

Viewpoint Photograph 5



View looking north east from Blorengue towards Abergavenny

Full extent of panorama, taken 07/08/19
This is a composite image made up of a number of 50mm photographs joined together horizontally to form an overall field of view which is wider than seen in detail by the human eye.

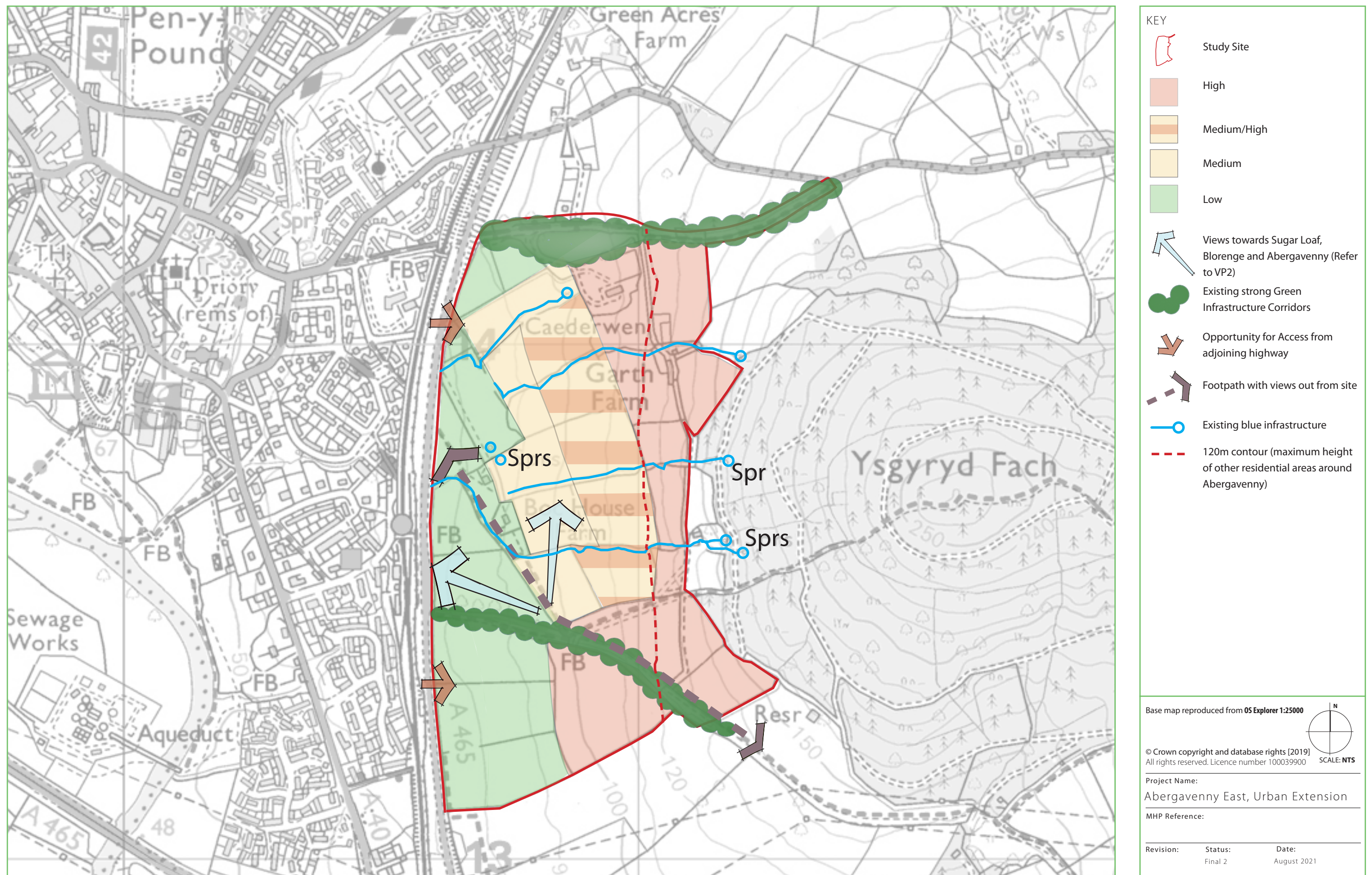


Figure 9 Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Sketch
19068 Abergavenny East, Urban Extension

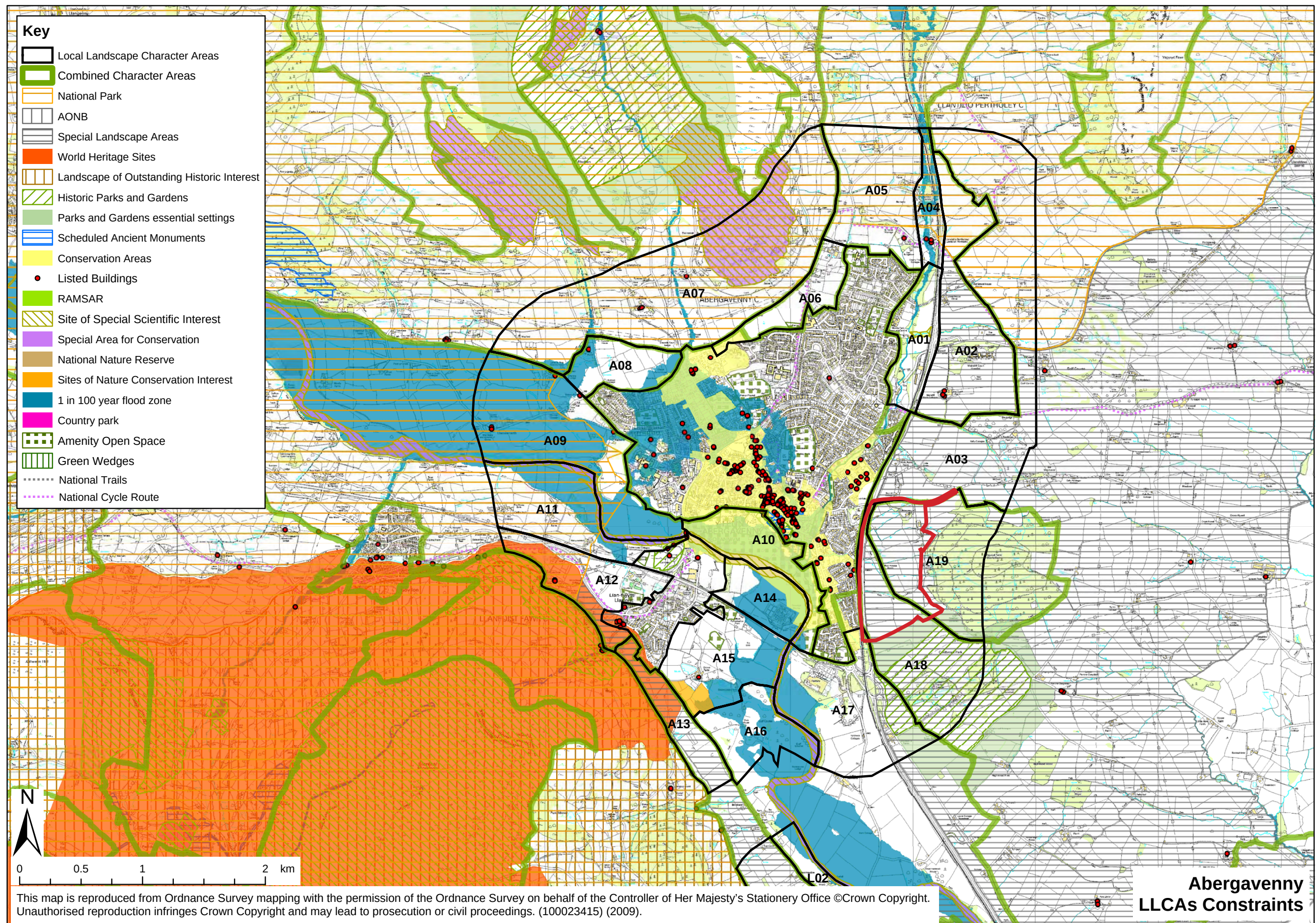


Figure 10 Monmouthshire Landscape sensitivity and Capacity Study - Abergavenny LLCA's Constraints Map
19068 Abergavenny East, Urban Extension

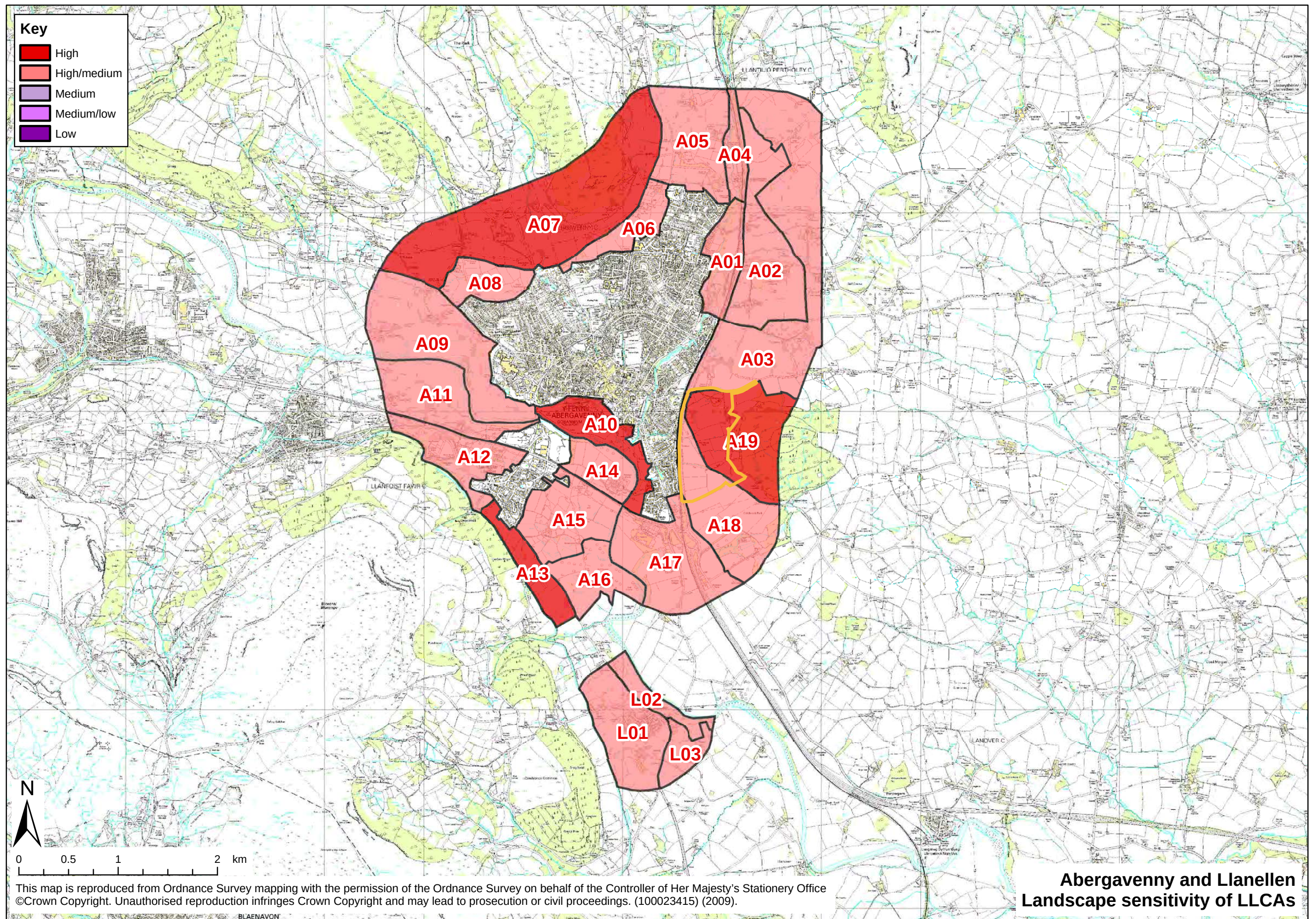


Figure 11 Monmouthshire Landscape sensitivity and Capacity Study - Abergavenny LLCA's Landscape Sensitivities
19068 Abergavenny East, Urban Extension

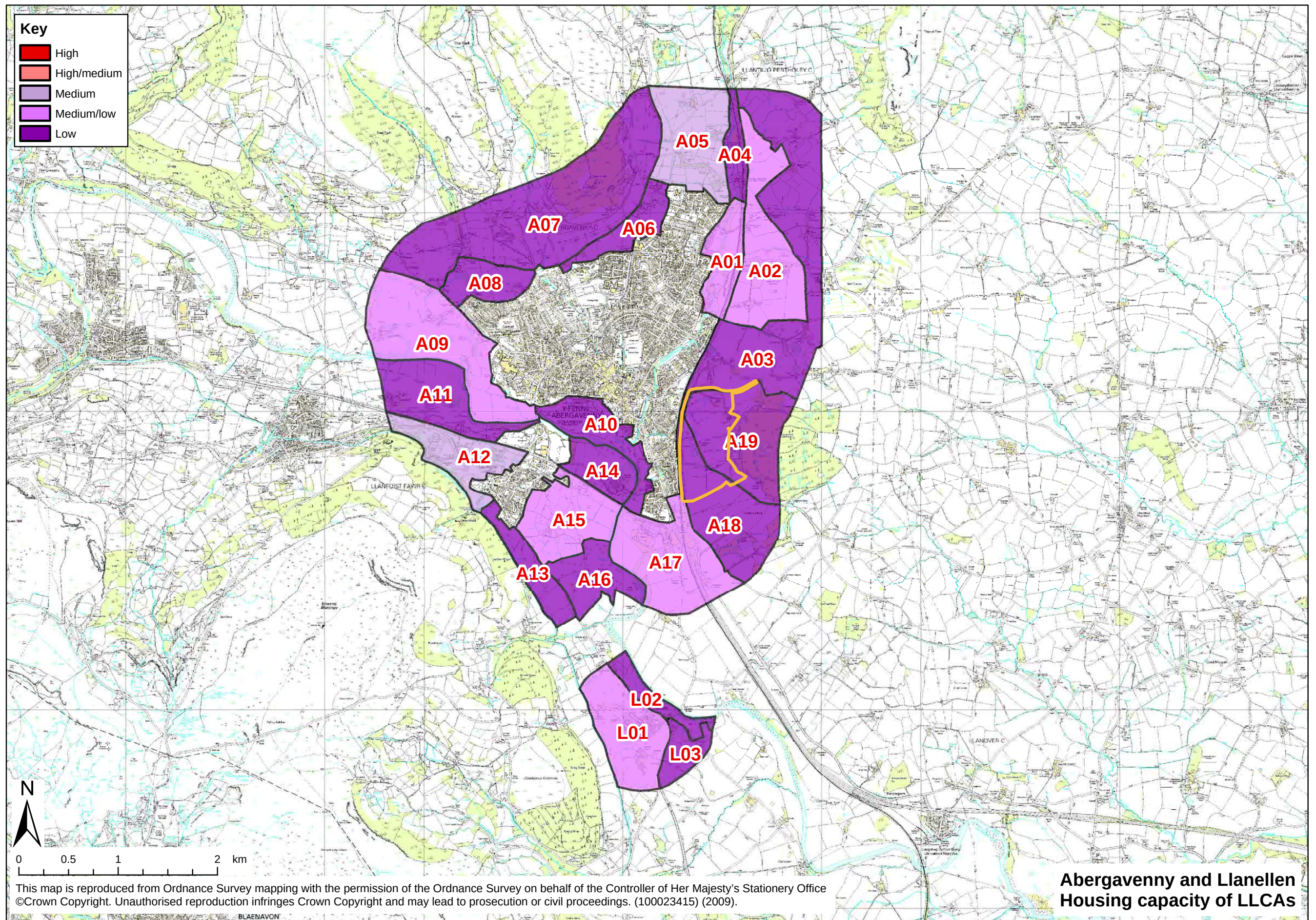


Figure 12 Monmouthshire Landscape sensitivity and Capacity Study - Abergavenny LLCA's Housing Capacity
19068 Abergavenny East, Urban Extension