



MoD housing for DTC
St Athan

Wider Context
existing **S:A02-2**
revision D



Key

- Open countryside
- Amenity space
- Residential areas
- Golf Course
- MoD St Athan
- St Athan runway area
- Water (Boverton brook)
- Primary road
- Secondary road
- Minor road
- Access road
- Proposed northern access road
- Railway line
- Services
- Existing access
- SFA sites



A038833[2]drgS:A02-2 revision D

07 May 2009

File: A038833[2]drfS01v1mcd

Scale: NTS

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3. Context appraisal

Location

301 MoD St Athan lies in the Vale of Glamorgan, a county primarily rural in character, with the majority of the population living in the towns of Penarth and Barry and the smaller settlements of Dinas Powys, Rhoose, Cowbridge and Llantwit Major. Scattered around the attractive countryside between these places are small villages and hamlets. St Athan is located to the south-east of the military base. The base is situated about 5 miles south of Cowbridge and about 3 miles east of Llantwit Major. There are minor settlements to the north of the base: Llanmaes, Picketston, St. Mary's Church and Flemingston. The B4265, which links Barry and Bridgend, lies to the south of MoD St Athan. The plan opposite shows MoD St Athan in relation to its wider context.

302 The four sites identified for SFA housing lie to the west, north-west and east of MoD St Athan, and the proposed DTC, as shown on the plan on page 12.

Adjoining land uses

303 MoD St Athan and its wider area are broken up into a number of land uses. The MoD and Welsh Assembly Government currently occupy the base itself. In the future, the site will comprise the Aerospace Business Park, the Defence Technical College and the Army base at West Camp. Within and adjacent to the base are a number of residential areas, the majority of which were constructed to provide service families' housing. Further residential areas lie within the smaller nearby villages and hamlets, many of which have close connection with the surrounding agricultural land and open countryside. Local services such as places

of worship, a primary school, doctor's surgery, community centre, Post Office, a convenience store and public houses can be found along Eglwys Brewis Road and within St Athan itself. There are additional services such as a primary school, secondary school, supermarket, shops and dentist in Llantwit Major. The area benefits from a large amount of amenity space, which provides green space, equipped play space and a recreational nine hole golf course.

Agriculture

304 Agricultural land classification assessments have been undertaken to assess the extent to which agricultural land may be a constraint. The detailed ALC survey of the land around St Athan identifies sub-grade 3b over most of the land, with small areas of grade 3a land on the western side of the survey area and other areas of grades 4 and 5. None of the proposed SFA sites is located on land within grades 1, 2 and 3a, which is regarded as 'best and most versatile land' and which is protected through national and local planning policies.

Movement

305 Broad movement issues are illustrated on the wider context drawing on the opposite and following pages. The B4265 runs between Cardiff and Bridgend and enables good accessibility to and from the area. This main route runs parallel to and south of MoD St Athan and provides access to the military base and existing housing areas. From this a hierarchy of routes can be seen with a number of primary roads linking around the perimeter of the base providing access to the base itself and secondary roads to adjacent villages. A bus service runs along Eglwys Brewis Road.

*Opposite page:
Wider context plan*



MoD housing for DTC St Athan

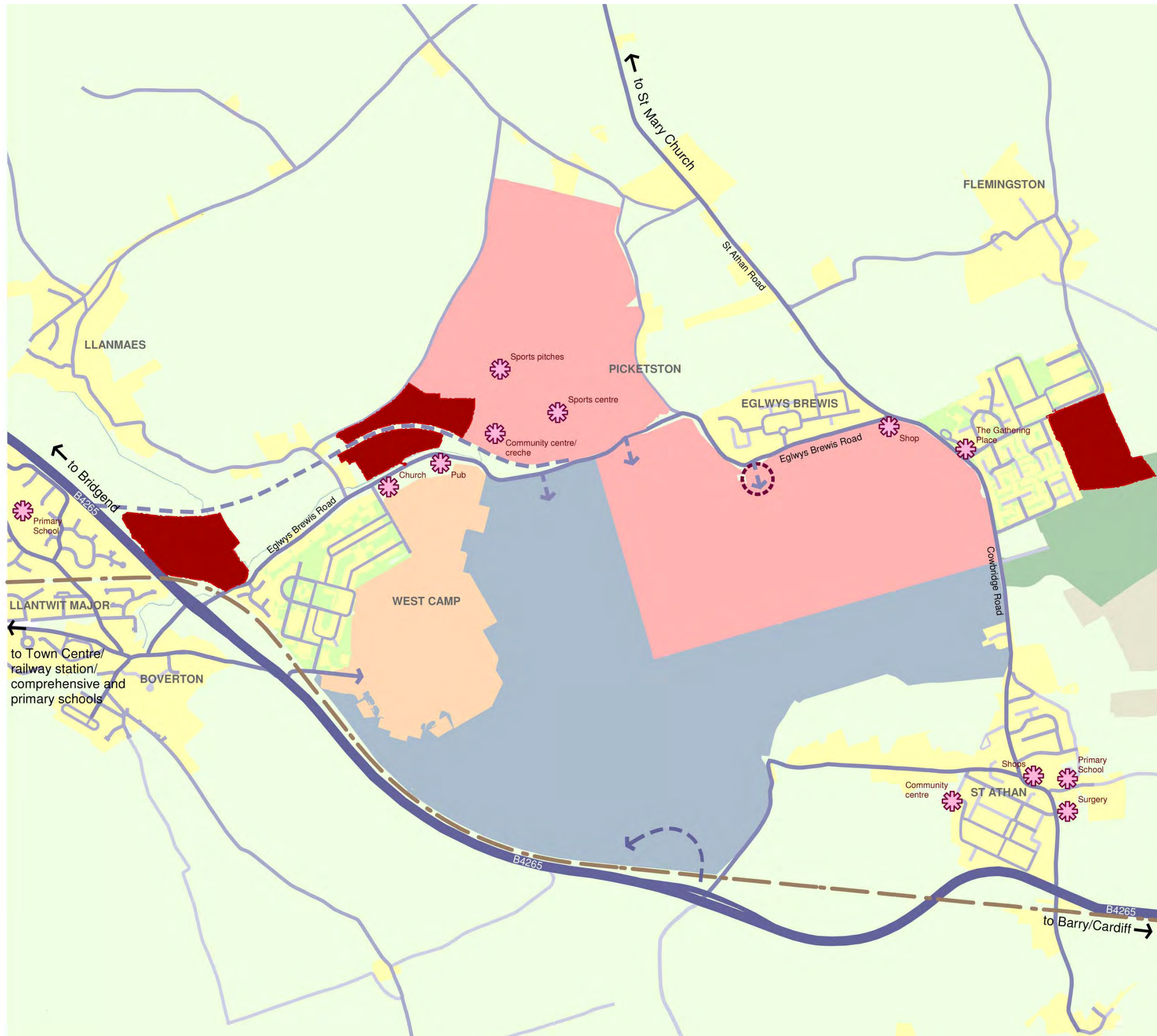
Wider Context proposed

s:A02

revision H

Key

- Open countryside
- Amenity space
- Residential areas
- Golf Course
- Ministry of Defence (MoD)
- Aerospace Business Park
- Defence Technical College
- St Athan runway area
- Field training area
- Water (Boverton brook)
- Primary road
- Secondary road
- Minor road
- Access road
- Proposed northern access road
- Railway line
- Services
- Proposed access points
- SFA sites
- DTC main gate



A038833[2]drgS:A02 revision H

07 May 2009

File: A038833[2]drgS01v1.mxd

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306 The nearest train station is in Llantwit Major, with a regular service running between Cardiff and Bridgend on the Vale of Glamorgan line.

307 A number of pedestrian rights of way lie within the area which cross some of the sites and provide access to the wider countryside. These links will need to be maintained, perhaps with some minor diversion where necessary. The existing housing areas have good footpath links that allow pedestrian permeability.

Planning designations

308 The site is covered by the *Vale of Glamorgan Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011* (UDP). The DTC proposal – and, hence, the SFA housing requirement – was not foreseen when the current development plans for the Vale of Glamorgan and adjoining local authority areas were formulated.

Two land use allocations affect the site:

Policy EMP 10 states that *'further appropriate developments in respect of RAF activity within the RAF St Athan base will be favoured provided there is no unacceptable impact on the local amenity'*.

Policy ENV 4 identifies special landscape areas - one of which covers part of one SFA site - and states that *'new development within or closely related to the following special landscape areas will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that it would not adversely effect the landscape character, landscape features or visual amenities of the special landscape area'*.

309 The Vale of Glamorgan Council is currently preparing the *Vale of Glamorgan Local Development Plan 2011-2026* (LDP). In 2008, the Council published and consulted on its *Draft Preferred Strategy* for the LDP. The strategy recognises and responds to both the DTC proposal and the Assembly Government's commitment in the *Wales Spatial Plan* that St Athan is to be treated as a 'strategic opportunity area'.

310 It is understood that the Council does not plan to place its draft LDP on deposit until late 2009. This is after the programmed date for the DTC/SFA planning application (May 2009) and, hence, the LDP is not expected to be available in time to guide the proposals.

Flood risk

311 A Flood Consequences Assessment for the development of Service Families' Accommodation has been carried out, the main findings of which are discussed below.

- There are two stream systems that drain the area. The eastern part of the area is drained via the Nant y Stepsau Stream to the River Thaw. The western part of the area drains via the Llanmaes Brook and Boverton Brook through Boverton and out to the estuary.
- The Stadium/ Golf Course site and Picketston South West site are in *Zone A – Low risk* and therefore only surface water drainage is considered for these sites.
- Tremains Farm and North of West Camp sites have areas of *Zone A* and areas of *Zone C2*. The areas of *Zone C2* have been defined by site specific modelling carried out by Entec. Development will therefore be directed away from these areas to ensure that the flood

*Opposite page:
Proposed wider
context plan*

Right:
Photographs
showing the
landscape character
and views between
Llanmaes and
Froglands Farm

- risk to the new development is low. Minimum finished ground floor levels for the houses on these two sites have been recommended.
- Surface water is considered in the Environmental Statement.

Noise

312 Due to the nature of some activities at the site, elevated levels of noise are associated with it. This is discussed further in the Environmental Statement.

Landscape character and views

313 The landscape appraisal has made reference to LANDMAP information available on the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) website. LANDMAP is defined as "...a specially devised national landscape information system ... [that] gathers, organises and evaluates information about landscape into a nationally consistent data set...". Individual studies of topics or 'aspect areas' of the landscape are described and evaluated during the landscape assessment. The five aspect areas are *visual and sensory, cultural landscape, historic landscape, geological landscape and landscape habitat*.

314 Reference to the LANDMAP information and site appraisal has confirmed that the four SFA sites are located within a number of distinct landscape character areas. Landscape elements and patterns within these areas and their settings combine to create distinct character areas. The pattern of topography and vegetation influence the visibility of the four sites.

Between Llanmaes and Froglands Farm

315 This is an area of undulating lowland, very much in contrast with the open large-scale character of the land to the east. It is located to the





south of Llanmaes, which is a conservation area with listed buildings, and extending south-eastwards towards West Camp. Llanmaes Brook, which flows in a south-east direction, is located in a shallow, narrow valley. The landform opens at its confluence with Boverton Brook to form a wider, shallow valley along Eglwys Brewis Road. Land use is primarily agricultural pasture with cattle and horse grazing. Fields are relatively small in scale, of irregular pattern, and divided generally by trimmed hedgerows and some taller hedgerows. Mature trees and other vegetation are associated with the course of Llanmaes Brook and Boverton Brook. Boundaries to the traditional village of Llanmaes are stone walls and access to the public footpaths is via stone stiles, a particular characteristic of the area. Public access is confined to public roads and the network of public footpaths, including the Valeways Millennium Heritage (VMH) Trail. A scheduled monument, Bedford Castel, is located to the south of Llanmaes.

316 The roads through the area are narrow and winding between trimmed hedgerows with occasional trees. Vernacular buildings occur alongside the road, as it passes through densely clustered settlements, which are typical of the Vale of Glamorgan. The proximity of the built-up areas of Llantwit Major and West Camp and the intrusion of traffic noise result in a strong urban fringe influence on what is otherwise a pleasant, traditional agricultural landscape.

317 Views are generally enclosed and contained by landform. To the west the character of views is rural, fringed to the north by the traditional village of Llanmaes. From further east, views towards Llantwit Major and West Camp are dominated by the built up areas. Through gaps in the built up areas the large buildings within West Camp can be seen.

*Left:
Photographs
showing the
landscape character
and views between
Llanmaes and
Froglands Farm*

*Right:
Photographs
showing the
landscape character
and views north of
West Camp*

Potentially sensitive landscape and visual receptors are the amenity of and views from residential properties, long distance footpath and caravan parks; landform (valley and ridgeline); landscape character; the scheduled monument and its setting, and the setting of Llanmaes, the conservation area and listed buildings.

North of West Camp

318 The land falls gently south-westwards away from Llanmaes and towards Boverton Brook. The landform is undulating, forming shallow domes, ridges and valleys. The area is mainly in agricultural use with large fields, particularly to the west where arable cultivation is more common. Field boundaries are defined by trimmed hedges and infrequent trees. North of the West Camp there are large scale modern farm buildings at New Barn in the north, at Froglands Farm and Millands Farm in the south-west of the area (where there is also a caravan park), and Picketston in the east. The character of the area is very much influenced by the large-scale industrial character of the buildings at MoD St Athan on the one hand, and the dense residential areas on the other, producing an urban fringe quality. The farmland also has an industrial quality, being intensively cultivated, with farm buildings of an industrial scale and character. There are fewer vernacular buildings and more frequent modern residences and larger residential developments.

319 From the north, near New Barn, the view is across West Camp, dominated by the large buildings within the base, in particular by the Super Hanger and "Twin Peaks" buildings, and in the distance the view is towards Aberthaw Power Station with its prominent chimney. In the southern part of the area, views are more enclosed, dominated by the settlements at West Camp and Llantwit Major. Views from the higher land





to the west and north are more open but are also urban fringe views given the scale and extent of existing settlement.

320 Potentially sensitive landscape and visual receptors are the amenity of and views from residential properties, public footpaths and caravan parks; and the vegetation pattern of field boundary hedgerows.

Picketston and Nant y Stepsau

321 Farmland to the north of Nant y Stepsau lies between 40 and 50 metres AOD, with little variation in landform. Fields are medium sized with hedges, some trimmed and some not, providing a moderate sense of enclosure. The area is bounded on the west by MoD St Athan and particularly the narrow lane to Picketston. Farmland extends to the east and the village of Picketston is located to the north.

322 The Nant y Stepsau is a broad stream within a shallow valley to the north of Eglwys-Brewis. There is associated scrub vegetation along the banks of the stream for part of the boundary with the housing at Eglwys-Brewis, which gives a strong sense of enclosure. The stream flows through a long narrow field, which has a tall hedgerow on the northern side, to the south of Picketston. It borders the housing area at Eglwys-Brewis, and is overlooked from both rear and front elevations. Potential views are obscured or filtered by vegetation in a number of locations. Views from this character area are confined, dominated by the residential area of Eglwys-Brewis.

323 Nant-y-Stepsau continues eastwards as a shallow valley with a meandering stream, crossing the road between St Athan and St Mary's Church (St Athan Road), before deepening and turning northwards to join

Left: Photographs showing the landscape character and views at Picketston and Nant y Stepsau

*Right:
Photographs
showing the
landscape character
and views east of
East Camp*

the Nant-y-Creek northwest of Flemingston, which in turn flows into the River Thaw.

324 The relative elevation of the land in this area allows distant views of the wider landscape. The horizon in these views is formed by ridges to the east, and the modern housing at Ty-Newydd/Flemingston to the south. Potentially sensitive landscape and visual receptors are the rural landscape character; amenity of, and views from, residential properties in Eglwys-Brewis and New Barn; and the landscape character and features of Nant y Stepsau.

East of East Camp

325 This area has a rounded dome landform, defined on its east side by the sharp change in slope to the River Thaw valley. To the west the land falls gently across cultivated land and the golf course towards East Camp. The majority of this character area is dominated by arable agriculture in medium to large-scale fields surrounded by closely trimmed hedges. Some of these are very broad with a range of woody species. Although it is predominately rural in character, this area is ringed by settlement and industry, which appears on the horizon in all directions.

326 On the lower ground there is a sense of separation from the surrounding settlements, industry and MoD St Athan. In contrast, on higher ground the power station and cement works at Aberthaw, MoD St Athan and adjacent settlement provide constant background noise and disturbance. The predominantly rural character of the landscape in this area gradually becomes urban fringe at the western edge, in a narrow band next to the settlements and the golf course. In the western part of the area, the visibility of and noise from MoD St Athan, the power station





and the B4265 are more intrusive, increasing the urban fringe influence. The landscape setting to the north and east is rolling pleasant farmland, mostly in large fields with substantial blocks of woodland. There are frequent scattered farms, clusters of houses and villages. Glimpses of the higher land to the north are available through a gap in the nearer hills.

327 Potentially sensitive landscape and visual receptors are landscape character: pleasant open rural character; views from surrounding settlements and more distant viewpoints; public footpaths, which are way-marked and provided with stiles. The Heart of the Vale promoted route crosses the area linking to Castleton in the south, and part of the Valeways Millennium Heritage (VMH) Trail passes to the north. The views from higher ground are wide ranging, indicating that any development here would potentially be visible from a wide area.

328 A preliminary tree survey was undertaken by Amenity Tree Care Limited in 2008. With respect to the SFA sites the survey includes trees and hedgerows recorded within each site. Some of these trees have amenity value individually, as defined by the tree survey, whilst others are grouped, collectively contributing to amenity value. All hedgerows within SFA sites are category C (*low quality and value*). The tree survey assessed trees within the SFA sites as either category B (*moderate quality and value*) or category C (*low quality and value*). No vegetation was assessed as category A (*high quality and value*) or category R (*to be removed for reasons of sound arboricultural management*).

329 The following plans show the context for each of the four sites.

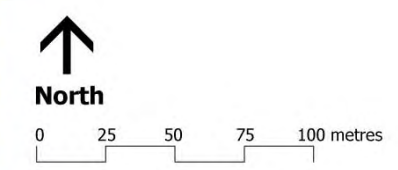
*Left:
Photographs
showing the
landscape character
and views east of
East Camp*



MoD housing for DTC
St Athan

East-Context **E:A03**
revision D

- Key**
-  Formal open space (golf course)
 -  Open countryside
 -  Amenity space
 -  Residential
 -  Community facilities
 -  Proposed DTC (controlled access)
 -  Car parking
 -  Special landscape area
 -  Activity nodes
 -  Focal green spaces
 -  Gateways
 -  Existing footpath / cycleway link
 -  Primary roads
 -  Secondary roads
 -  Minor roads
 -  Access point
 -  Trees
 -  TPO's
 -  Bus route
 -  Proposed development site



A038833[2]drgE:A03 revision D 07 May 2009
 File: A038833[2]drgEv2mcd Scale 1:1250@A1
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MoD housing for DTC
St Athan

West- Context

w:A03
revision C

Key

-  Farmland
-  Open countryside
-  Amenity space
-  Residential
-  Existing footpath / cycleway link
-  Gateways
-  Primary roads
-  Secondary roads
-  Minor roads
-  Existing trees
-  Car parking
-  Bus route
-  Proposed development site
-  Railway line
-  Proposed northern access road



North

0 25 50 75 100 metres

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07 May 2009

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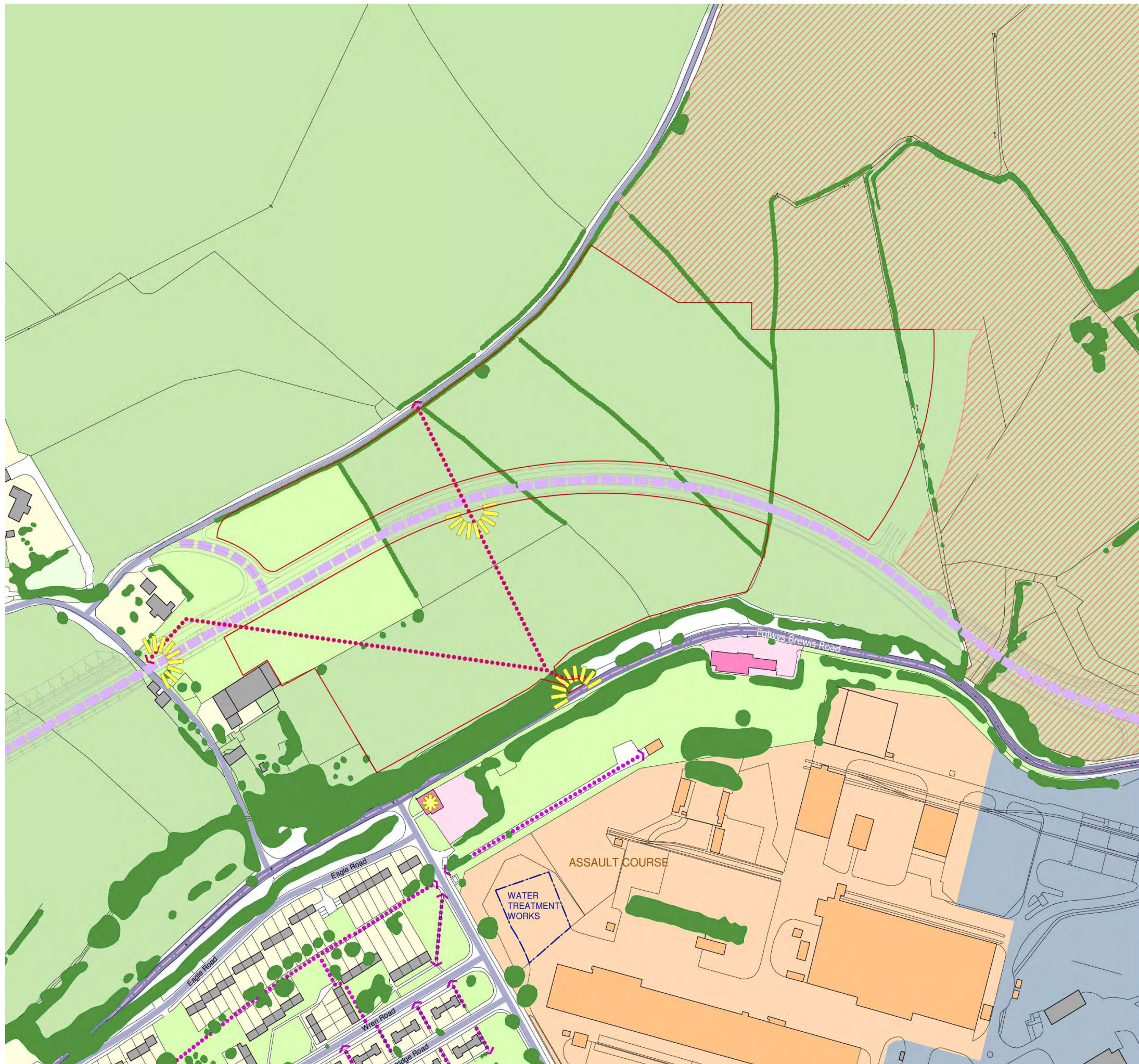
Scale 1:1250@A1

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Key

- Farmland
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- Amenity space
- Residential area
- Community facility
- Ministry of Defence (MoD)
- Car parking
- Focal green space
- Gateways
- Existing footpath / cycleway link
- Public right of way
- Primary road
- Secondary road
- Minor road
- Proposed northern access road
- Existing trees
- TPO's
- Bus route
- Proposed development site
- Proposed DTC
- Listed building
- Aerospace Business Park



North



A038833[2]drgNW:A03 revision E

07 May 2009

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