
LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

ON BEHALF OF

RICHBOROUGH ESTATES LIMITED AND

MR & MRS ADCOCK

FOR

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

AT

LAND EAST OF STOKE ROAD AND NORTH OF NORMANDY WAY (A47),

HINCKLEY

V2 – MARCH 2022



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Document History

Rev	Purpose	Author	Checked	Date
V1	Information	JB		30.02.22
V2	Issue for Planning	JB		30.03.22



1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Introduction

- 1.1. Zebra Landscape Architects Limited ('ZLA') was commissioned by Richborough Estates Limited and Mr & Mrs Adcock (the 'Applicant') to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) of proposals to develop a new residential development on land east of Stoke Road and north of Normandy Way (A47), Hinckley (the 'site'); see Appendix 1 of this LVA.
- 1.2. The Applicant is seeking outline planning application for the erection of up to 475 dwellings, including public open space, land reserved for a primary school together with future expansion land (Use Class F1(a)), landscaping, drainage and associated infrastructure. (the 'proposed development'); see Appendix 2 of this LVA.
- 1.3. The site is located at OS Grid Reference: SP 42176 95770 (the site centre) and is situated within the administrative area of Hinckley and Bosworth Council, who function as the Local Planning Authority (the 'LPA'). The total site area is 25.4 Hectares; see Appendix 1 of this LVA.
- 1.4. This LVA is part of a suite of documents accompanying an outline planning application for the proposed development. The site is briefly described in Section 2 of this LVA, and details how the proposed development has been designed and planned with consideration to predicted effects on landscape character and visual amenity in the surrounding environment and neighbourhood. There is further site details given in the Design and Access Statement (DAS) which accompanies the planning application.
- 1.5. This report has been prepared by a Chartered Landscape Architect and a Professional Member of Landscape Institute with experience in landscape design and planning in the development sector. All drawings referenced within this assessment are in Appendices of the LVA.

The Purpose of this Landscape Visual Appraisal

- 1.6. The purpose of this LVA is to identify the baseline conditions of the site and surrounding area and to determine those landscape and visual characteristics that might inform the design of the development proposals, including recommendations for mitigation. It then provides an appraisal of the landscape and visual effects predicted to arise from the development of the site as follows:
 - Landscape fabric, when there is physical change to components of the landscape; landform, land use or land cover;
 - Landscape character, caused by changes in the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape; and
 - Visual amenity caused by changes in the appearance of the landscape as a result of Development.
- 1.7. This report is set out in the following sections:
 - Site description and analysis is presented in Section 2 of the LVA, and is based on our field-based assessment from the Autumn of 2021, and more recently in February 2022 when representative photography was undertaken.



- Project Description – This describes the elements of the proposed Development with the potential to cause effects on landscape fabric, landscape character and/or visual amenity. The site selection and design reiteration measures incorporated into the final design to help mitigate potential impacts are also outlined, this is contained in Section 3 of the LVA.
 - Assessment Criteria – This section identifies the relevant guidance used to carry out the assessment, consultation to date, viewpoint selection and defines the study area; this is contained in Section 4. The detailed methodology can be found in Appendix 4.
 - Relevant Landscape Related Planning Policy - The main planning policies, guidance, and background documents relevant to this appraisal; see Section 5.
 - Baseline Conditions – The landscape and visual character of the site and its setting is provided, establishing receptors within the study area with theoretical visibility of the proposed Development; see Section 6.
 - Potential Residual Effects – An assessment of potential effects on the landscape and visual receptors identified in the baseline assessment, drawing upon a combination of representative and specific viewpoints to demonstrate the potential effects as a result of the proposed Development; see Section 7.
 - Summary of Findings – This section provides an overview of the proposed Development in its landscape and visual context, drawing out the key findings of the assessment and concluding on the acceptability of the proposed Development in landscape and visual terms; see Section 8, with a Conclusion at Section 9.
- 1.8. This application represents a submission for an outline planning consent for a new residential development, which is based on the Illustrative Masterplan prepared by the Masterplanning team of Pegasus Planning Group (ref: P18-1531_011 Rev. I, dated March 2022, see Appendix 2). See Section 2 of this LVA for a summary of the development proposal.
- 1.9. The proposed development is considered by this LVA not subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) as confirmed through consultation with the LPA in their correspondence dated February 2022 (ref: 21/10199/PREMAJ); see Appendix 4 of this LVA.



2. THE SITE

Overview

- 2.1. The site for the development proposal is situated at OS Grid Reference: SP 42176 95770 (the site centre) and total 25.4 Hectares. The Site Location Plan contained in Appendix 1 of this LVA illustrates the site's position and quantum, whilst plan ZLA_1213-L-101 illustrates the site's context in terms of landscape designations; see Appendix 3.
- 2.2. The site is situated north of Normandy Way, and is a relatively long and thin and runs parallel to this road leading down to Stoke Road on the western periphery of the site, beyond which there is a modest area of the site (single field); see Image 2.1:

Image 2.1: Aerial photograph of the site area. N.B. ZLA has marked the approximate location of the site area with a solid red line. Source: Google Earth 2021 (extract taken February 2021).



Landscape Fabric

- 2.3. The following landscape fabric is noted; see Image 2.1 overleaf:
 - The site constitutes five interconnecting fields managed for livestock pasture east of Stoke Road, and a further field west of Stoke Road.
 - Internally, there are mature hedgerows (native species) with scattered hedgerow trees (broad leaf species) which broadly define each field. There is a small woodland block within the western area of the site, and a group of extensive trees around the access from Normandy Way (neighbouring, outside of the site area).



- The site is enclosed by (east of Stoke Road):
 - North: Mature native field hedgerows with scattered hedgerow trees along the northern site boundary. These hedgerows outgrown and gappy in places. There is open fields beyond managed as livestock pasture.
 - East: There is a line of native scrub and mature broadleaf trees along the brook on the eastern site boundary. There is open fields beyond managed as livestock pasture.
 - South: Defined by groups of extensive broad leaf, native trees and native scrub understorey. Beyond which there is a vegetated verge of native scrub running alongside Normandy Way with a ditched feature. Normandy Way (main vehicle route) runs parallel to the site with extensive urban built form situated on this route.
 - West: Defined by a native hedgerow with a limited number of scattered trees (to the south western edge) with a vegetated verge of native scrub running alongside Stoke Road with a ditched feature. These hedgerows outgrown and gappy in places. Stoke Road (local minor route) is situated beyond this boundary.
- The site is enclosed by (west of Stoke Road):
 - North: Native field hedgerow enclose this site area. The hedgerows outgrown and gappy in places. There is open fields beyond managed as livestock pasture.
 - East: Native hedgerow with a limited number of scattered trees (to the south eastern edge) with a vegetated verge of native scrub running alongside Stoke Road with a ditched feature. These hedgerows outgrown and gappy in places. Stoke Road (local minor vehicle route) is situated beyond this boundary, along which a pedestrian footway and local cycle route run.
 - South: Native hedgerow with a limited number of scattered trees (to the south eastern edge) with a vegetated verge of native scrub running alongside Normandy Way with a ditched feature.
 - West: Extensive boundary of native hedgerow and broadleaf native trees. Beyond which there is an existing gated vehicle access with wetland area.

Neighbouring Land Uses

2.4. The site is situated on the urban edge of Hinckley, and its neighbouring context is as follows; see Image 2.1 overleaf:

- North:
 - To the north of the site, there is open countryside. The landform and landscape fabric is similar to that of the site with medium rectangular fields enclosed by mature native hedgerows with scattered broadleaf trees. These neighbouring fields are managed for livestock pasture. These fields run between the site and the outlying local vehicle route (Rogues Lane) which is approximately 0.85km north of the site, with which there scattered farmsteads (Frith House Farm, Highfields Farm and I C Fields Farm) and nucleated dwellings.



- North East:
 - The brook which encloses the site runs on a north to south trajectory with an extensive tree line of native broadleaf trees and native scrub vegetation. Between the site and Rogues Lane (local vehicle route, approximately 0.8km) landform rises (circa 118m AOD) and fields of a medium scale, enclosed by robust native hedgerows with scattered native broadleaf hedgerow trees. There is farmstead (name unknown) approximately 0.2km of the site.
- East:
 - Landform rises east of the site (circa 122m AOD around Ashby Road). Ashby Road is approximately 0.65km east of the site. There is extensive residential dwellings (up to two and a half storey height) and the Bosworth Community Hospital (up to two storey height) on this route. Intervening land is managed for livestock pasture within rectilinear, medium scaled fields with native hedgerows and native broadleaf trees scattered within their line.
 - There is discernibility from Normandy Way along its eastern edge, and is overlooked by long-standing residential development along Ashby Road (up to two and a half storey) to the east, as well as existing, modern day, residential dwellings situated off Normandy Way to the south east of the site.
- South East to South West:
 - Normandy Way runs along the southern edge of the site. The combination of landform, field hedgerows and groups of extensive trees along the southern edge of the site (extending to the south western edge with Stokes Road) is sufficient to substantially filter the site from view when passing along this route.
 - There is extensive urban built form situated off Normandy Way including a large supermarket with car parking. There is an extensive industrial/business park (Sunnyside) with built form of up to 10-12 metres height approximately, including office buildings, warehousing, employment buildings and fast food/roadside services.
 - There is a large pub and eatery situated off the traffic island on Normandy Way (A47)/Stoke Road with extensive car parking to the south west. There is extensive residential development beyond this and extending along Normandy Way to the west.
- West:
 - Stoke Road cuts through the western edge of the site dividing the bulk of the land parcel from a single, small, triangular field west of Stoke Road. Landform west of the site is similar to that of the western site area (circa 105m AOD), which itself is lower than the central area of the site, circa 118m AOD. The field is enclosed by an extensive boundary of native hedgerow and broadleaf native trees. Beyond which there is an existing gated vehicle access with wetland area. Landform west of the site is similar, with a medium scale field pattern managed for arable crop production and livestock pasture.
 - There is extensive residential development beyond this and extending along Normandy Way to the west.



- North West:
 - Landform west of the site is similar, with a medium scale field pattern managed for arable crop production and livestock pasture. Brook Farm neighbours the north western edge of the site, and is accessed from Stoke Road.

2.5. Along Normandy Way there is an extensive pedestrian route with a local cycle route. This route is south of the carriageway. Normandy Way is a local spine road for accessing the town of Hinckley, as well as wider towns such as Barwell, Earl Shilton and Nuneaton; respectively 2.25km north east, 4.5km north east and 6km south west of the site.

Landform within the Site

2.6. In its general sense, landform within the site varies from 119m AOD at the approximate site centre, sloping to 106m AOD on the eastern edge with the existing brook, and 105m AOD to the west of Stoke Road.

2.7. The highest land is situated within the approximate centre of the site at circa 119m AOD. Landform falls eastwards down to the existing brook which bounds the site's eastern edge, circa 110m AOD. Landform along the south eastern to south western edge with Stokes Road (from 110m AOD to 105m AOD). The northern edge follows a similar landform.

Summary

2.8. The site affords public access limited along a single Public Right of Way to the south western-western edge between A47 Normandy Way and Stoke Road. This route passes through the site from the busy A47 and links with the wider open countryside beyond the site.

2.9. The site contains typical features such as medium scale rectilinear field pattern and undulating landform. The fields area enclosed by native hedgerows and scattered broad leaf trees. However, it was noted there is a degree of degradation of landscape character noted on site including outgrown and gappy hedgerows, limited scattered hedgerow trees, direct views across the urban setting of the site including the effects of the A47 Normandy Way, road signage and road lighting set on high columns.

2.10. The site is currently managed for agriculture, and is situated adjoining the A47 Normandy Way, which is a main route. The site is overlooked by existing urban development; including (long-standing and contemporary) residential built form to the east, southern and south western periphery of the site. Furthermore, the site is overlooked by industrial, commercial and employment buildings.

2.11. There is direct intervisibility between the site and urban area of Hinckley, and wider views across the open countryside beyond the site. Development in the wider open countryside is dispersed and nucleated. Whilst there is intervisibility across the wider open countryside from the higher landform of the site, views out to the countryside are largely to the east and west.

2.12. The landform within the site sever intervisibility with the open countryside to the north for the majority of the site, where by open agricultural fields, field hedgerows, scattered hedgerow trees, woodland spinneys and extensive tree lines along watercourse are discernible to the east and west of the site. Within these views, the urban context, built form and the transient movement of vehicles along the A47 is prevailing which reinforces the perception of the site on the urban edge. In these situations, there is intervisibility between the site and the industrial/commercial built form off the A47 including McDonalds, Morrisons, Wickes store and officing.



- 2.13. From a landscape and town character perspective, these urban land uses definitely contribute to the site's perception as urban edge. The northern edge of the site, which is neighboured by an existing farmstead (Middlefield Farm) which overlooks the site, is an approximate edge between land that is clearly 'undulating arable and pasture farmland with gentle valleys' to that which has an increasingly strong association with the town.
- 2.14. Settlement and built form within the open countryside is typically 'sporadic farmsteads on the outer edges, within a strong rural setting.' When on site, especially in the winter months (February 2022), one is aware of the presence of the surrounding urban related uses, albeit on the edge of the town, on a strong road frontage, rather than feeling divorced from it, in the open countryside.
- 2.15. This helping define a transition from open countryside (in a landscape sense) to the built edge of Hinckley. Consequently, the site has a stronger relationship with the town rather than the wider open countryside, and perceived as having an equivalence to the neighbouring urban land uses in a spatial sense.



3. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND MITIGATION MEASURES

3.1. The Applicant is seeking outline planning application for the erection of up to 475 dwellings, including public open space, land reserved for a primary school together with future expansion land (Use Class F1(a)), landscaping, drainage and associated infrastructure; see Appendix 2.

3.2. The following briefly summarises the development proposal:

- Dwellings to not exceed two and a half storeys, with the scheme being predominantly two storey in height, and of similar density to the existing settlement pattern;
- Provision 1 Hectare of the site area for the provision of a new school facility (N.B. Built form anticipated to be of similar height to the proposed residential dwellings);
- Access to the development will be via a new traffic island and access from Stokes Road on the western site edge;
- Main vehicle route through the scheme from the new traffic island, with secondary and tertiary routes radiating from;
- Combined pedestrian and cycle route across the proposed scheme;
- Formal public open space and informal pocket parks through the scheme;
- Green corridor routes running through the scheme for pedestrian and cycle friendly movement, and linkage to the wider urban area and open countryside beyond the boundary of the site;
- SUDs attenuation basins and swales; and
- Public open space including the provision children's play areas, formal and informal landscape treatment, ecological betterment and habitat creation.

3.3. The development will be implemented in a number of phase (market conditions permitting). The DAS supporting this application provides full details of the development proposals, and proposed schedule of implementation.

Mitigation Measures

3.4. In siting the proposed development, the physical constraints of the site and existing development patterns surrounding the site have been taken into consideration in order to minimise the potential for the proposed development to break skylines and represent prominent new structures in views towards the site, into the town of Hinckley, and outwards around the wider open countryside.

3.5. The landscape and visual sensitivities of the site have been influential in the development of the Illustrative Masterplan (Appendix 2). The masterplan proposals were developed iteratively with the findings of our field-based assessment, and our initial assessment of the likely landscape and visual effects of the proposal by working collaboratively with the wider project team including the Masterplanning team.



- 3.6. With consideration of the foregoing, recommendations for the architectural form and vernacular of the proposed development have been integrated into the architectural design and the overall layout of the site (N.B. Landscaping and landscape mitigation is considered further in this section of the LVA).
- 3.7. The prescription of the building heights for each proposed dwellings, and the relative finished floor level ('FFL') for each proposed unit have been tested through on-site assessment, so that the proposal is not substantially greater, and is reflective of the pattern of current residential built form on the northern edge of Hinckley (south of Normandy Way i.e., Ashby Road to the east, Nelson Drive to the south-south east and Gainsborough Avenue to the south west of the site), and below the vertical height of existing commercial/employment buildings along Normandy Way i.e.' Wheatfield Way.
- 3.8. These measures contribute to offsetting the likely landscape and visual effects by reducing visual prominence and overall discernibility of the proposal, and are considered to be 'embedded' within the Illustrative Masterplan (Appendix 2).
- 3.9. Embedded mitigation measures also extends to the following:
- The proposed new residential dwellings have been deliberately arranged within the main body of the site area, enabling land within the periphery of the site to be developed for retaining existing landscape fabric, new landscaping and the provision of Public Open Space.
 - The new residential built form will be set within the northern site boundary at a marginally lower topography below that of the open countryside beyond the site. This measure, combined with the extensive landscaping of the northern periphery of the site for green infrastructure and public open, so nestling new built form within the existing landform.
 - The primary street of the development is oriented (generally north east to south west east to west through the length of the land parcel. This avoids long contiguous roadways running across (up and down) the topography. A route as proposed enables retained landscape fabric and new green infrastructure to break up the mass of the proposal throughout the scheme.
 - Those routes which do pass up/down, rather than along the landform, are secondary and tertiary, or private driveways and consequently are short in length. Through the design of these routes afford tree planting to break up the mass of development and afford filtering of views, as well as the integration of proposed green corridors where further tree planting and green infrastructure is provided for similar effect.
 - Development set back from the eastern edge to protect the existing brook (on the eastern edge), as well as the south and western edge to protect existing landscape fabric of hedgerows and trees and the extensive groups of mature trees along Normandy Way. Similarly, the provision of existing field hedgerows and hedgerow trees have been optimised within the interior of the site to create a mature landscape setting, facilitate green corridors through the proposed development scenario.
 - Building heights have been restrained to those similar to the site's context with existing residential development, or less than the commercial/employment buildings along Normandy Way opposite the site
 - The cladding of proposed buildings to be undertaken with a non-glossy matt material in a sensitive colour to ensure the new buildings are visually recessive.



- Roofing materials would be finished in a non-glossy matt material in a neutral colour, and that this specification does not generate unacceptable glare when viewed from the wider landscape; and
- Homes would not be overly glazed so the new buildings are visually recessive (if practicable and corresponding with future user's needs).

Landscape Mitigation Measures

- 3.10. Landscape mitigation measures have been developed through consideration of the host landscape character for the proposed development, as well as reviewing the arboriculture and ecological assessments (which support this planning application). These provide an appropriate solution for a development that offsets and / or reduces landscape and visual effects, and if practicable, enhances the local landscape fabric.
- 3.11. The combination of these factors has iteratively guided the layout of the site, as well as the landscape proposals for the development, as illustrated within the drawn Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement Strategy which supports this planning application. Furthermore, these principles will be instrumental in developing the detailed design for the discharge of planning conditions post approval.
- 3.12. In the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment (published September 2017) the Local Planning Authority identifies the site to be situated within a landscape character area which recommends maintaining and enhancing the fabric of the host landscape character area. The Local Planning Authority has published the following landscape guidelines for this host landscape character area (see Section 6 of this LVA for further details):
 - *'Encourage the use of traditional 'Midlands style' hedgelaying to manage hedgerows, improving their structure and biodiversity value and strengthening landscape character.'*
 - *Maintain the rural character of the landscape. Ensure development is fully integrated into and informed by the landscape with its rural, harmonious pattern of small villages which are well-integrated in the landscape, and local vernacular styles and materials. Conserve the rural gap between Stoke Golding and Dadlington.*
 - *The Sustainable Urban Extension to the north of Barwell should aim to create a distinct new and contemporary identity and character(s) whilst responding to the existing context.*
 - *Maintain views to church spires and towers e.g. on the wooded skyline at Stoke Golding and long distance views to other churches in surrounding villages. Conserve rural views and setting of settlements.*
 - *Maintain and enhance the recreational assets including rights of way network and canal.*
 - *Maintain positive management of the Ashby Canal and seek opportunities to extend and enhance areas of wetland habitat.*
 - *Create new and conserve existing notable habitats, in particular deciduous woodland and mesotrophic grassland.*
 - *Encourage tree planting to regenerate mature/ veteran trees as they come to the end of their lives.*
 - *Improve the integration of settlement edges such as north of Barwell, e.g. with planting and use of materials appropriate to the rural character.'*



- 3.13. In collaboration with the consulting Ecologist for this proposal (Preliminary Ecological Assessment, dated: February 2022), several green infrastructure and ecological enhancements have been integrated into the proposed development. The focus of these measures is less about screening and filtering views, rather, the enhancement of the local landscape character and the site's habitat value.
- 3.14. Drawing on this LVA and the forgoing technical information, the proposed Illustrative Masterplan (Appendix 2) has further evolved through landscape related input. Through effective inter-disciplinary discussions with the wider design team, several landscape mitigation measures would be integrated into the development proposals. The landscape strategy for the proposed scheme is illustrated in Appendix 3 (see ZLA_1213-L-200), and these measures are summarised as follows:
- Retain the majority of the existing vegetation and boundary trees on and adjacent to the application site and integrate these elements with the masterplan proposals.
 - Enhance existing open boundaries of the site with proposed woodland buffer planting to integrate the proposed development into the surrounding countryside to the west, south and east.
 - The primary street is oriented north east to south west through the length of the site enabling the opportunity for extensive tree planting within the street's layout. This tree planting will run through the core of the development breaking up the mass of the scheme and filtering views of the proposed built form.
 - Secondary and tertiary routes and private driveways are shorter in length and afford the opportunity for tree planting to further break up the mass of development and filter views of the scheme. These routes interconnect with proposed green corridors throughout the scheme for further tree planting and green infrastructure for a similar effect.
 - The retention of existing hedgerows lines (where permissible) for the creation of green corridors running through the scheme of varying width retaining existing landscape fabric, and affording new tree planting, native structure planting and ecological betterment. These route are integral to the green infrastructure strategy enabling safe pedestrian and combined pedestrian and cycling routes. These routes break up the (perception) of development mass and have been arranged along existing and new hedgerow lines which predominantly run through the width of the development (i.e., north to south) and so filter views of new built form from the wider urban setting.
 - Extensive landscape buffer along the northern boundary providing extensive opportunity for tree planting creating substantial landscape fabric for new development to be integrated within and positioned nestled below the landform of the open countryside north west of the site to reduce visual prominence across the wider environment.
 - Substantial public open space running through the core of the development enabling extensive green infrastructure with tree planting to break up development mass and filter views of new built form. This public open space interconnects with the aforementioned green corridors.
 - Significant public open space to the eastern edge with the site. The eastern edge is on rising land, and setting development back from the brook would enable substantial green infrastructure to break up development mass and filter views from the public routes to the east.



- Significant public open space to the southern and western edge of the site to break up development mass and create interconnecting public open space with green infrastructure, formal and informal landscaping and maximise the opportunities for habitat creation and wildlife preservation.
 - Provide benefits to the existing community by increasing their sense of connection to the countryside and by providing a range of new parkland habitats and amenity spaces. Which can be accessed and enjoyed by the existing neighbourhoods local to the site area.
 - The retention and enhancement of areas of existing hedgerow, and new tree planting to the site's boundaries to significantly filter views from the environments outside of the site. N.B. This will provide a degree of filtering of the proposal during the initial period of building out the proposal and first occupation.
 - Tree planting within the main body of the development to break up the perception of development mass, and maturation, to filter views of the built form.
- 3.15. In combination, the establishment of these measures serves to reduce the potential for landscape and visual effects on the identified baseline receptors. These proposals however go further; through maturation, they contribute to the protection and enhancement of typical features characteristic of the local landscape. Further to this, ZLA recommends the following two points:
- To endeavour that existing and new landscape elements are appropriately managed to ensure establishment and long-term management for effective mitigation of the proposal in the long term; and
 - To develop appropriate landscape proposals for individual plots within the development, including planting of native hedgerows, shrubs and tree species of local importance, and where practicable, allow for fruit trees (species of local importance), and where practicable, local provenance. This will ensure continuity of the overall scheme, preservation of landscape mitigation measures as well habitat enhancement, along with enhancing local landscape character.
- 3.16. Accordingly, the development of the proposal, will ensure the long-term management of the site's landscape fabric, affording betterment for visual amenity, and wildlife of the area.
- 3.17. Overall, the outline landscape proposals reflect the policy guidance, and develop the objectives of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and the Biodiversity Management Strategy and in doing so, emphasise the core functions required of a high quality mixed use and residential scheme.
- 3.18. The developed landscape will provide benefits to the existing community and thus generate support for the development at the planning stage, while providing shared facilities during the building out of the scheme, supporting the integration of the existing and new communities. Ease of build-out has also been considered at an early stage in the design, with self-contained amenity space provision for each of the main phases.



Construction Phase

- 3.19. It is envisaged that the development proposal would be delivered in a number of phases (subject to market demand). Given the foregoing, the following activities and elements have the potential to cause a temporary direct effect on the landscape fabric of the application site, and an indirect effect, on the landscape and visual amenity of the study area:
- Erection of, and visual effect, of temporary site hoarding / fencing to enclose the site, and tree protection fencing (to accord to BS 5837: 2012) within the site, and along its boundaries;
 - Temporary portacabin structures for site welfare and office, and vehicle parking area;
 - Earthworks excavation for the formation of construction levels, and the protection of the existing brook during the construction phase through protective fencing along its route;
 - Construction of the new access route;
 - Construction of site structures; and
 - HGV deliveries to site and movement of vehicles on site.
- 3.20. All ground disturbances would be confined as far as practicable and working widths during construction operations would be restricted resulting in a minimal interference with existing soil structures and habitats.

Construction Mitigation

- 3.21. The details of construction methods, timing and phasing are not known at this stage; however, this appraisal has assumed a reasonable worst-case scenario. The following measures should be implemented and adhered to during the temporary construction phase:
- An approved Arboriculture Method Statement (AMS) incorporating best practice guidance set out in British Standard 5837: 2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction could be adopted, which would ensure retained trees and other vegetation are not adversely affected during the construction process;
 - Visual screening, such as hoardings, should be adopted around sections of the site boundary to protect more sensitive visual receptors in close proximity, including residential receptors immediate to the site's boundaries and beyond Normandy Way, and users of this route, who have the greatest potential to be affected by the project;
 - Construction works that create dust would be kept to a minimum within proximity of residential receptors and receptors in close proximity to the site, particularly the northern and eastern boundaries; and
 - The small number of existing residents who live adjacent to the site would be more sensitive to construction lighting. Mitigation measures for construction lighting are likely to include directional fittings and restricted hours of operation, and if requested by the LPA, could be outlined within the Lighting Strategy for the project.



4. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

- 4.1. This LVA has involved desk study, field work, data processing and analysis as well as interpretation using professional judgement undertaken by a Chartered Landscape Architect during November 2021 and based on best practice guidance ¹.
- 4.2. Typically, a 15-year time horizon is used as the basis for conclusions about the residual levels of effect. Fifteen years is a well-established and accepted compromise between assessing the shorter-term effects (which may often be rather 'raw' before any proposed mitigation has had time to take effect) and an excessively long time period.

Judging Overall Significance

- 4.3. A judgement is reached, based on the assessment, as to whether an effect is significant or not. Those degrees of effects that are considered to be significant by the assessor for this LVIA are judged to be effects that are either Major or Major/ Moderate.
- 4.4. GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification 1/13 (2013)¹ notes that: 'Concerning 'significance', it is for the assessor to define what the assessor considers significant...Depending on the means of judgment and terminology (which should be explicitly set out), effects of varying degrees of change (or levels of change), may be derived. The assessor should then establish (and it is for the assessor to decide and explain) the degree or level of change that is considered to be significant.' (GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification

Significance of Landscape Effects

- 4.5. GLVIA3 states, at paragraph 5.56, that:

'There are no hard and fast rules about what makes a significant effect, and there cannot be a standard approach since circumstances vary with the location and context and with the type of proposal. At opposite ends of the spectrum it is reasonable to say that:

- *Major loss or irreversible negative effects, over an extensive area, on elements and/ or aesthetic and perceptual aspects that are key to the character of nationally valued landscapes are likely to be of the greatest significance;*
- *Reversible negative effects of short duration, over a restricted area, on elements and/ or aesthetic and perceptual aspects that contribute to but are not key characteristics of the character of landscapes of community value are likely to be of the least significance and may, depending on the circumstances, be judged as not significant;*
- *Where assessments of significance place landscape effects between these extremes, judgements must be made about whether or not they are significant, with full explanations of why these conclusions have been reached.'* (GLVIA3 paragraph 5.56.)

¹ *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment 2013)f*



Significance of Visual Effects

4.6. GLVIA3 states, at paragraph 6.44, that:

'There are no hard and fast rules about what makes a significant effect, and there cannot be a standard approach since circumstances vary with the location and context and with the type of proposal. In making a judgement about the significance of visual effects the following points should be noted:

- *Effects on people who are particularly sensitive to changes in views and visual amenity are more likely to be significant;*
- *Effects on people at recognised and important viewpoints or from recognised scenic routes are more likely to be significant; Large-scale changes which introduce new, non-characteristic or discordant or intrusive elements into the view are more likely to be significant than small changes or changes involving features already present within the view.'* (GLVIA3 paragraph 6.44.

Definition of the Study Area

4.7. To establish the baseline context of the site and its surroundings, and to assess the potential limit of material effects, the study area has been considered at two geographical scales:

- Initially, a broad 'study area' was adopted, the extent of which is illustrated on Plan ZLA_1213-L-101 and corresponds with ZLA_1213-L-103 (Appendix 3), which is formed mainly on a desk-based study. This broad study area enabled the geographical scope of the appraisal to be defined based on the site's environmental planning context and the extent of views to and from the site; and
- After undertaking a field-based assessment, this broad study area was redefined to the land area most likely to experience landscape and visual effects. The extent of this detailed study area is 2km as illustrated on plan ZLA_1213-L-103 (Appendix 3).

4.8. Through on-site observations, a zone of primary visibility (ZPV) has been identified. This was done through visiting publicly accessible locations, walking PROW and driving the local road network. From this, ZLA have determined a zone by which the site can be discernible, and which would normally be close-ranging in distance from the site.

Zone of Primary Visibility

4.9. This primary zone of visibility is where representative viewpoints are assessed, and whilst there may be views from the wider area beyond the primary zone, views are less open, and likely to be filtered, or to an extent screened by existing landscape features, built development or landform.

4.10. A field-based observations were undertaken during winter (February 2022). ZLA visited publicly accessible locations, walking PROW and driving the local road network. From this work, ZLA have determined a zone by which the site is discernible, and which would normally be close-ranging in distance from the site.

4.11. This primary zone of visibility is where representative viewpoints are assessed, and whilst there may be views from the wider area beyond the primary zone, views are less open, and likely to be filtered, or to an extent screened by existing landscape features, built development or landform.



4.12. From our field-based assessment, ZLA noted the following:

- An existing Public Right of Way passes through the south western-western edge of the site. This affords intervisibility across the western periphery of the site, with existing field hedgerows within the site's interior, and intervening landform screening wider views of the site area.
- The site is situated adjacent to the A47 Normandy Way (spine road) and Stoke Road (local minor route), with the A47 running along the length of the site's southern edge, beyond which there is existing urban development. This includes (long-standing and contemporary) residential built form to the east, southern and south western periphery of the site. Furthermore, the site is overlooked by industrial, commercial and employment buildings along the A47 Normandy Way. As a consequence, the site is screened by these intervening development. N.B., Officing up to three storey height and industrial/employment buildings up to 10-12 metres in overall height
- There is scope to see the site from the A47 Normandy Way when passing east and west of the site. Direct views of the site are filtered by groups of extensive trees along the southern site boundary, and verge, with the A47.
- Landform rises to the east upwards towards and there is no discernibility of the site beyond the A447 Ashby Road. This route is lined with residential development (up to two and a half storey in height) and the Bosworth Community Hospital, which in combination further screen views of the site from the urban edge and from outlying urban areas around Barwell and Elmsthorpe.
- The landform within the site sever intervisibility with the open countryside to the north for the majority of the site, where by open agricultural fields, field hedgerows, scattered hedgerow trees, woodland spinneys and extensive tree lines along watercourse are discernible to the east and west of the site.
- Within these views, the urban context, built form and the transient movement of vehicles along the A47 is prevailing which reinforces the perception of the site on the urban edge. In these situations, there is intervisibility between the site and the industrial/commercial built form off the A47 including McDonalds, Morrisons, Wickes store and officing.
- Across the wider countryside, landform rises to the north west and north of the site. However, the combined effect of intervening robust field hedgerows with scattered hedgerow trees and occasional woodland copses and sporadic farmsteads on the outer edges, filters views of the urban edge of Hinckley (if not screens).

4.13. This primary zone of visibility is where representative viewpoints are assessed, and whilst there may be views from the wider area beyond the primary zone, views are less open, and likely to be filtered, or to an extent screened by existing landscape features, built development or landform.

Viewpoint Selection

4.14. Given the foregoing, representative viewpoints have been selected to reflect the principle that this appraisal is to examine the 'worst case' scenario (with the field-based assessment for these undertaken during winter-time (February 2022)). In selecting these viewpoints, ZLA has been conscious of appraising the site from all points of the compass, as well as within a range of distances to the site, as well as testing the development proposals from a range of receptor types.



- 4.15. A list of the selected viewpoints and their reasons for selection is provided in Table 4.1. The location of these representative viewpoints is shown on plan ZLA_1213-L-103 (Appendix 3) and is reflective of the observations made on site (and within the open countryside) by ZLA as noted in paragraph 4.9 to 4.13 above.
- 4.16. In its general sense, landform within the site varies from 119m AOD at the approximate site centre, sloping to 106m AOD on the eastern edge with the existing brook, and 105m AOD to the west of Stoke Road. The topographical position of each viewpoints is indicated below for information.

Table 4.1: Summary of Representative Viewpoints (undertaken by ZLA in February 2022)

View-point	Location	OS Grid Ref	Approx. Distance from Site's Centre (site circa 105 to 119m AOD)	Reason for Selection
1.	View from Stoke Road north of the site	441603, 295695	0.1km N/0 degrees, Looking east	Viewpoint situated on Stoke Road, local minor route passing from the urban setting of Hinckley to the wider open countryside. This viewpoint is outside of a National or local landscape designation, and is not a promoted route. The users of this vehicle route would have a medium susceptibility to visual change. This viewpoint demonstrates the discernibility of the site (against the wider urban setting and development) when travelling towards Hinckley from outlying settlement. Visual sensitivity is medium. Topo: 104m AOD
2.	View from PRoW (LPA ref: T60/2) situated to the north of the site looking south	441734, 296196	0.3km N/10 degrees, Looking south	Viewpoint situated on a PRoW passing through open countryside on landform equivalent to the highest part of the site. This viewpoint is outside of a National or local landscape designation, and is not a promoted route. The users of this PRoW would have a high susceptibility to visual change. This viewpoint demonstrates the discernibility of the site from open countryside on the outskirts of an outlying settlement. Visual sensitivity is high. Topo: 115m AOD
3.	View from PRoW (LPA ref: U33/3) situated on the settlement edge of Stapleton (outlying village to Hinckley) across long range distance	443565, 298177	2.5km NE/40 degrees Looking south west	Viewpoint situated on PRoW within long range of the site. This viewpoint is outside of a National or local landscape designation, and is not a promoted route. The users of this PRoW would have a high susceptibility to visual change. This viewpoint demonstrates the discernibility of the site from open countryside on the outskirts of an outlying settlement. Visual sensitivity is high. Topo: 98m AOD



View-point	Location	OS Grid Ref	Approx. Distance from Site's Centre (site circa 105 to 119m AOD)	Reason for Selection
4.	View from PRoW (LPA ref: U43/1) situated on the urban edge along Ashby Road to the east – north east of the site	443105, 297104	0.65km E-NE/70 degrees Looking S-SW	Viewpoint situated on a PRoW on the urban edge around Ashby Road. This viewpoint is outside of a National or local landscape designation, and is not a promoted route. The users of this PRoW would have a medium susceptibility to visual change. This viewpoint demonstrates the discernibility of the site from an urban edge location within landform elevated above that of the site. Visual sensitivity is medium. Topo: 120m AOD
5.	View from the settlement edge at the junction of Normandy Way and Drake Way. The viewpoint is situated on local cycle route along Normandy Way	442524, 295694	0.3km E/90 degrees Looking west	Viewpoint situated at the junction of main vehicle route and residential street. The viewpoints is also on a local cycle route which runs along Normandy Way. This viewpoint is representative of those views from the local road network, as well as the residential neighbourhoods situated on Drake Way Visual sensitivity is medium (road users). Topo: 116m AOD
6.	View from the settlement edge at Normandy Way and Drake Way. The viewpoint is situated on local cycle route along Normandy Way	441379, 295378	0.55km W-SW/255 degrees Looking east	Viewpoint situated on main vehicle route and local cycle route which runs along Normandy Way. This viewpoint is representative of those views from the local road network. Visual sensitivity is medium (road users). Topo: 106m AOD
7.	View from Public Footpath (LPA ref: U41/1) situated west-south west of the site in open countryside around the village of Wykin	440890, 295418	0.9km W-SW/270 degrees Looking east	Viewpoint situated on PRoW within long range of the site. This viewpoint is outside of a National or local landscape designation, and is not a promoted route. The users of this PRoW would have a high susceptibility to visual change. This viewpoint demonstrates the discernibility of the site from open countryside around the outlying village of Wykin. Visual sensitivity is high. Topo: 118m AOD
8.	View from Public Footpath (LPA ref: U3/3) situated west of the site in open countryside	438736, 295235	2.5km w/260 degrees Looking east	Viewpoint situated on PRoW within long range of the site. This viewpoint is outside of a National or local landscape designation, and is not a promoted route. The users of this PRoW would have a high susceptibility to visual change. This viewpoint demonstrates the discernibility of the site from open countryside on the outskirts of an outlying settlement. Visual sensitivity is high. Topo: 110m AOD



View-point	Location	OS Grid Ref	Approx. Distance from Site's Centre (site circa 105 to 119m AOD)	Reason for Selection
9.	View from Public Footpath (LPA ref: U39/1) situated north west of the site in open countryside	440912, 295876	0.85 km NW/295 degrees Looking south east	Viewpoint situated on PRow within close to medium range of the site. This viewpoint is outside of a National or local landscape designation, and is not a promoted route. The users of this PRow would have a high susceptibility to visual change. This viewpoint demonstrates the discernibility of the site from open countryside. Visual sensitivity is high. Topo: 106m AOD
10.	View from Public Footpath (LPA ref: U2/1) situated on the south eastern edge of Dadlington (outlying village to Hinckley) across long range distance	441180, 297491	1.85 km NW/310 degrees Looking east-south east	Viewpoint situated on PRow within long range of the site. This viewpoint is outside of a National or local landscape designation, and is not a promoted route. The users of this PRow would have a high susceptibility to visual change. This viewpoint demonstrates the discernibility of the site from open countryside on the outskirts of an outlying settlement. Visual sensitivity is high. Topo: 98m AOD

Private Residential Properties

- 4.17. Views from private residential properties, although likely to be of high to very high sensitivity to changes in the view, are not protected by National planning guidance or local planning policy. Accordingly, changes to the character, 'quality' and nature of private views are not a material planning consideration in the determination of a planning application. However, they remain relevant to this review of the predicted extent and nature of visual change, so are reviewed briefly below.
- 4.18. The largest group of residential receptors is represented by those dwellings situated to the east along Ashby Road (situated circa 124m AOD, which is higher than the site area), residential neighbourhoods situated off Normandy Way (A47) including Nelson Drive and Drake Way to the south east, Stoke Road to the south and Gainsborough to the south west-west of the site. These residential dwellings are predominantly two and two and a half storey in height, but do not adjoin the site area.
- 4.19. There is extensive employment and commercial built form south of the site, situated off Normandy Way. These buildings are up to approximately 12 metres in height.
- 4.20. The availability of views across the wider urban area of Hinckley are significantly filtered, if not screened, by intervening residential development, and the commercial/employment development along Normandy Way (at a relative location to the site). Consequently, the site is discernible from the outer urban edge of Hinckley where existing residential development is situated off Normandy Way. For instance; Nelson Drive and Gainsborough Avenue.



- 4.21. In combination, these existing residential, employment and commercial built form create a strong urban influence, with many elements of the is urban area discernible from within the site area. There are a small number of scattered dwellings and farmsteads to the north east, north west and north of the site.

Interim Summary

- 4.22. Given the foregoing, ZLA found that the overall discernibility of the site was widely limited, with views substantially filtered, if not screened beyond 1km to the east, south and south west of the site. Given the general rise of landform west and northwards, there is potential to see the site from a wider distance of around 2km. These observation have been utilised for the selection of representative viewpoints, and through the undertaking of the LVA during February 2022, this appraisal tests the worst case scenario.



5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

- 5.1. The findings of the relevant environmental and planning designations are illustrated on Plan ZLA_1213-L-101 (Appendix 3) and summarised in this section.
- 5.2. The following documents are relevant and will be discussed as appropriate later in this LVA:
- National Planning Policy Framework Revision (revised 20th July 2021); and
 - Hinckley and Bosworth Site Allocations & Development Management Policies DPD (2016);
 - Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Consultation Draft Local Plan 2020-2039 (June 2021); and
 - Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's Good Design Guide - Supplementary Planning Document Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council 2020.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.3. On the 20 July 2021, the Government published a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a presumption in favour of sustainable development; this being the golden thread running throughout the document.
- 5.4. For landscape, this means recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside (para. 174 (b)) and balancing any 'harm' to the landscape resource with the benefits of the scheme in other respects. Para 174 (b) states the following:
- '.....recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.'*
- 5.5. Furthermore, Section 12 of the NPPF addresses the issue of good design and recommends that planning decisions should aim to ensure that developments respond to the local character and history. Specifically, in paragraph 127 it is stated that development should *'add to the overall quality of the area...'*, *'are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping...'* and *'be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting...'*.
- 5.6. This balancing exercise is to be undertaken by the decision taker (in this case the LPA) and falls outside the remit of this appraisal. The benefits of the scheme are to be weighed against the effects on the landscape character and visual amenity as set out in this report, as detailed in the Planning Statement accompanying this application. The policy framework is supported by the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) where relevant.



Current situation surrounding Local Planning Policy within the Borough of Hinckley and Bosworth Council

Local Plan 2006 to 2026

- 5.7. The Core Strategy is the key Development Plan Document (DPD) in the Local Plan 2006 to 2026 (formerly Local Development Framework (LDF)) providing the vision and spatial strategy for the borough. The Local Plan is adopted, and engaged, is a material consideration for the LPA in appraising the appropriateness of this planning application.
- 5.8. The document outlines the broad locations proposed for housing development and other strategic needs such as employment, retail and transport development. The core strategy will also draw on national and regional strategies that have implications for the future of the borough.
- 5.9. The core strategy is the key Development Plan Document (DPD) for the borough and all other documents within the Local Plan 2006 - 2026 (formerly LDF) must conform to it.

Hinckley and Bosworth Site Allocations & Development Management Policies DPD (2016)

- 5.10. The Hinckley and Bosworth Site Allocations & Development Management Policies DPD (2016) forms part of the Local Plan 2006 to 2026. It contains development management policies which will be used to assess planning applications over the plan period.

The Draft Local Plan

- 5.11. The LPA are currently working on a new Local Plan, which will set out land allocations and planning policies for the period 2020 to 2039.
- 5.12. The draft plan sets out a preferred strategy for housing and economic growth and includes a number of planning policies covering a range of issues such as conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment, sustainable transport, good design and responding to the challenges of climate change. The policies will be used to guide development and respond to economic, environmental and social issues within the borough.
- 5.13. This Draft Local Plan has been published. The Plan is yet to be adopted, and as a consequence, this document forms a material consideration in undertaking this LVA, the draft Local Plan carries limited weight.

Landscape-related Designations and Other Considerations

- 5.14. Landscape-related designations and policy considerations within 3km of the site are shown on plan ZLA 1213-L-101 (Appendix 3). In summary:
 - National landscape designations: The site does not lie within or close to a nationally designated landscape; and
 - Local landscape designations: The site does not lie within or close to a locally designated landscapes, such as Strategic Gap, Significant Gap, Local Green Space or similar.
- 5.15. Given the foregoing, the site area is not afforded elevated protection in terms of National and local planning policy.



Arboriculture Matters

- 5.16. With reference to the Arboriculture Survey and Constraints Report BS 5837: 2012 (ref: ZTL_117_AIA_Rev. B, dated March 2022), which is submitted in support of this detailed planning application, the consulting Arborist found the following:
- The survey recorded a total of 101 individual trees, 53 hedgerows and 8 groups of trees, totalling 162 items.
 - Of all the surveyed items, then majority of trees were considered to be of low quality (categorised as C under BS 5837: 2012 criterion).
 - The majority of items identified across the Study Area are primarily of low or no value, with the exception of minority of category B items (moderate quality under BS 5837: 2012 criterion).
 - It is noted that these category B items are located either off-site or around the periphery and therefore should not adversely constrain the main body of the Study Area. Any forthcoming design should seek to exploit existing breaks within hedgerows and proposed appropriate reinforcement of existing green corridors.
- 5.17. With regard to the future development of the site, tree planting should be incorporated into the landscaping scheme, especially if tree removal is required to facilitate the development proposal. Such planting would enhance the landscape setting of the site and provide long-term amenity benefits to the surrounding areas.

Ecology Matters

- 5.18. With reference to the Ecological Impact Assessment (ref: ZEL_172_PEA, dated February 2022) which supports this planning application, there are some ecological features were identified as having Nature Conservation Value (and therefore potential to affect the sensitivity of the landscape fabric).
- 5.19. However, overall, there were no 'in principle' ecological constraints to the proposed development. Recommendations for the retention of key areas of habitat and creation of additional habitats have been developed iteratively with inter-disciplinary discussions between the Ecologist and ZLA to realise the drawn Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement Strategy (plan ref: ZLA_1144-L-200), which supports this planning application. These landscape proposals focus on retaining and improving the ecological connectivity across the site.

Heritage Matters

- 5.20. The visual character of the landscape can be influenced by Heritage assets, which may enrich its historic value. This LVA does not address the significance and value of heritage assets but considers heritage assets addresses only as far as they are components of the wider contemporary landscape.
- 5.21. The site is not situated within, or adjoining, a Registered Park and Garden, World Heritage Site, or Registered Battlefield. The site is not situated within, adjoining, a Conservation Area. Additionally, there are no Heritage assets within the quantum of the site or adjoining its boundaries. Furthermore, whilst there are a number of Listed Buildings within the wider context to the site, these are situated either within an existing urban settlement, or of sufficient intervening distance that the site is generally not discernible and there is no anticipated scope for direct intervisibility.



Hinckley and Bosworth Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006 to 2026)

- 5.22. The Hinckley and Bosworth Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006 to 2026) was adopted in December 2009, and includes the over-arching general policies, to which the development proposals will be tested within the accompanying Planning Statement. Policies that are specific to the site in landscape and visual terms are:

Policy DM4

- 5.23. Policy DM4 is entitled 'Safeguarding the Countryside and Settlement Separation', and states the following:

'To protect its intrinsic value, beauty, open character and landscape character, the countryside will first and foremost be safeguarded from unsustainable development. Development in the countryside will be considered sustainable where:

a) It is for outdoor sport or recreation purposes (including ancillary buildings) and it can be demonstrated that the proposed scheme cannot be provided within or adjacent to settlement boundaries; or

b) The proposal involves the change of use, re-use or extension of existing buildings which lead to the enhancement of the immediate setting;

and:

i) It does not have a significant adverse effect on the intrinsic value, beauty, open character and landscape character of the countryside; and

ii) It does not undermine the physical and perceived separation and open character between settlements; and

iii) It does not create or exacerbate ribbon development.....'

- 5.24. ZLA notes that this is the main Local Planning policy which the development proposals will be appraised against in this LVA. Further to this, the following policy is pertinent:

Policy DM10

- 5.25. Policy DM 10 is entitled 'Development and Design' and states:

'Developments will be permitted providing that the following requirements are met:

c) It complements or enhances the character of the surrounding area with regard to scale, layout, density, mass, design, materials and architectural features;

e) It incorporates a high standard of landscaping where this would add to the quality of the design and siting.....'

Consultation Draft Local Plan 2020-2039 (June 2021)



5.26. The Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan will set out the vision and objectives for the growth of the borough up to 2039. The plan will:

- *'Identify land and areas for development for a broad range of uses;*
- *Identify areas that should be conserved or enhanced and where future development should be carefully managed;*
- *Set clear policies that guide decisions on planning applications; and*
- *Indicate how the plan will be delivered, including infrastructure, and how progress will be monitored.'*

5.27. Pertinent Draft (Consultation) policies include the following:

NAT10

5.28. Draft (Consultation) Policy NAT10 is entitled 'Landscape Character Development', and states the following. N.B. Emphasis added by ZLA.

'Proposals will protect and enhance the key landscape features and visual sensitivities of the landscape character areas identified in the latest Borough Council Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Sensitivity Study. Proposals will be required to:

a. Where appropriate incorporate and implement the landscape strategies and/or guidance set out in the most up to date Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Sensitivity Study;

b) Protect and enhance the character and qualities of the local landscape through appropriate design and management;

c) Make provision for the retention and enhancement of features of landscape importance;

d) Where appropriate, provide landscape mitigation;

e) Where significant landscape impacts are likely to occur a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) should be prepared.'

5.29. ZLA notes that this is the main landscape derived policy within the Draft Consultation Local Plan, and further to this, the following Draft (Consultation) policies are pertinent:

NAT01

5.30. Draft (Consultation) Policy NAT01 is entitled 'Green Infrastructure', and states. N.B. Emphasis added by ZLA.

'Development proposals will be supported which contribute to the growth and enhancement of the Borough's multi-functional green infrastructure network in line with the following requirements:

a) On-site green infrastructure requirements should be planned and designed from the outset as a network of multifunctional spaces which identify and respond to the sites local context.....

b) The scheme identifies important local character features as a starting point for the green infrastructure proposals and incorporates them into the scheme to reference, reflect and enhance the local environment.....



- c) *Development shall contribute to the green network through the integration of multi-functional green infrastructure into masterplans, or where it can be demonstrated to be more appropriate, through delivery of enhancements or expansion of the green network through off-site delivery, in accordance with the latest Borough Council Green Infrastructure Strategy.....*
- d) *Developers must consider the long-term management and maintenance of green infrastructure and should demonstrate how these considerations have informed site proposals.....'*

PMD01

- 5.31. Draft (Consultation) Policy PMD01 is entitled 'High Quality Design', and states. N.B. Emphasis added by ZLA.

'The Borough Council will require the highest standards of design, architecture, inclusivity and place-making. Development will be supported where it positively takes into consideration the adopted Hinckley & Bosworth Good Design Guide (SPD), the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code, any Design Guide contained in a made Neighbourhood Plan, and any other relevant national design guidance.'

- 5.32. Part D and Part J state:

'd). The development complements or enhances the character of the surrounding area with regards to scale, layout, density, massing, design, high quality materials and architectural features.'

j). Provides an appropriate level of well-designed and well-located high quality landscaping, including all new streets to be tree-lined where appropriate, and the implementation of green and/or blue infrastructure in line with, in particular, policies NAT01 and NAT11.

NAT11

- 5.33. Draft (Consultation) Policy NAT11 is entitled 'Blue Infrastructure', and states. N.B. Emphasis added by ZLA.

'New development will be required to contribute towards the delivery of a high quality multi-functional Blue Infrastructure network by expecting Blue Infrastructure assets to be provided, protected, maintained and enhanced to deliver multiple benefits and services for biodiversity, recreation and landscape.'

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's Good Design Guide - Supplementary Planning Document Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council 2020

- 5.34. This supplementary planning document will form a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. It should be read in conjunction with the adopted development plan to ensure adherence to Borough-wide and location specific policy. The SPD does the following:

- *'Provides details of the design development and planning application process, including clearly setting what will be required of applicants;*
- *Provides Borough-wide, strategic urban design principles that all development should seek to reflect, together with introducing the key components of development as a means of describing design and highlighting how good design can mitigate potential impacts on climate change;*
- *Provides place-specific understanding and principles that reflects the Borough's rich local identity;*



- *Provides use-specific design principles on key development types: new residential developments.'*

5.35. The Design Guide states:

'One of the key factors for design in the Borough is acknowledging that it is predominantly rural. The area's urban and rural settlements interact with a significant landscape backdrop. This backdrop has a varied and diverse character including settled forests, rolling farmland, open farmland, village farmland, and agricultural parkland associated with historic aristocratic estates.'

5.36. The Design Guide continues and highlights the following objective:

'To protect this natural landscape environment, development should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.'

5.37. Pertinent to the site, and its location, the Design Guide states:

'At a wider level protect the perception of separation between settlements, including those in the designated green wedges, ensuring that new development does not result in harm to existing environments.'

Interim Summary

5.38. ZLA notes the following:

- The NPPF shows a clear presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- The site does not fall within, or adjoin, any National or local landscape designations; and
- There are no heritage assets within, or adjoining the quantum of the site.

5.39. Given the foregoing, the site is not afforded elevation protect under National and local planning policy.

5.40. The Local Planning Policies (adopted and draft (presently undergoing consultation)) contain a number of overarching policies of relevance to this study. The main themes of these policies, against which the proposed development could be tested, have been summarised here for convenience:

- Development proposals should consider the latest Landscape Character Assessment and its guidelines to retain and manage landscape features that contribute to wider landscape character and the setting of development.
- New development should seek to conserve and restore the primary characteristics defined in character assessments and important features of the host landscape character area.
- The location, materials, scale and use of any proposed development should be sympathetic to and complement local landscape character.
- An assessment of landscape and visual effects is required to support a planning application where there is possibly a detrimental effect on landscape as a resource.



6. BASELINE CONDITIONS

Existing Landscape Character Assessment

- 6.1. This section appraises the existing, or baseline conditions of the character of the site, and its landscape context through consideration of published landscape assessments.
- 6.2. Such an assessment is worthwhile enabling a better understanding of the site, and its context, but rarely delivers sufficiently site-specific or contemporary information to enable robust conclusions about the significance of any change through the proposed development. As such, ZLA has also undertaken its own field-based assessment of the site and its context, which is included later in this section.

Background Published Evidence Base Documents

- 6.3. The following documents are relevant and will be discussed as appropriate later in this LVA:
- Natural England National Character Assessment;
 - Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment (September 2017); and
 - Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study for Leicester & Leicestershire (October 2017).

National Character Assessment

- 6.4. Natural England has described and classified landscape character areas across large, broad regional area. These are published in the National Character Area (NCA) profiles. Natural England finds the site to be within NCA 94. This national Character Area is referred to as the 'Leicestershire Vales', with extends across a total area of nearly 72,000 Hectares; see Appendix 8 of this LVA and Figure 6.1 below:

Image 6.1: Extract from Natural England's National Character Area (NCA) 94: Leicestershire Vales. N.B. ZLA has marked the approximate location of the site with a red circle. Extract taken February 2022



- 6.5. With consideration of ZLA's field-based assessment, while this NCA is broadly representative of the site's landscape, and its context, the description is far too generic to robustly inform an appraisal of the suitability of the development proposals at the site. Consequently, ZLA will refer to the published Landscape Character Assessment developed at a County and Regional level by the County Council and the Local Planning Authority, which is specific in its focus.

Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study for Leicester & Leicestershire (October 2017)

- 6.6. The Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study for Leicester & Leicestershire was published in October 2017). This study was undertaken by a technical third party organisation, and was prepared for the Local Planning Authority, as well as neighbouring authorities, including, Leicestershire County, Leicester City, Blaby District, Charnwood Borough, Harborough District, Melton Borough, North West Leicestershire District and Oadby & Wigston Borough Council.
- 6.7. The Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study provides evidence to help ensure that locations identified for economic and housing development conserves and enhances landscape, biodiversity and green infrastructure. Using a systematic assessment framework it examines the sensitivity of the landscape, exploring the extent to which different areas can accommodate development without impacting on their key landscape qualities.
- 6.8. It also consider: 'the potential for positive change, particularly through the development and enhancement of GI. This includes identifying opportunities to develop GI that delivers benefits or services including better connected biodiversity networks, flood risk management, recreation and carbon management. The aim is to create resilient, high quality development which meets communities' aspirations whilst contributing to net biodiversity gains across the county as whole.'
- 6.9. This study utilises landscape character areas identified at a regional level. With consideration of Figure 6.1 of this study, the LPA finds the site to be sited within the 'Mease/Sence Lowlands' Landscape Character; see Appendix 8. This landscape character area is described as follows. N.B. ZLA has underlined those elements common to the site's context:

'Undulating landform, with frequent small streams feeding into the larger water courses of the Mease and Sence Rivers which characterise the area. Fields are a mixed of arable and pasture, and generally medium-large in size. Fields are bound by hedgerows with frequent trees (mature oaks), while willows are found adjacent to streams and field ponds. Settlement is comprised of small villages, which are often located on higher ground.'

- 6.10. This study continues, and states the following. N.B. ZLA has underlined those elements common to the site's context:

'Wide, panoramic views are afforded across the flat floodplain landscape, although views are occasionally enclosed by woodland copses and hedgerow vegetation. Existing large farm buildings can be prominent in views. Churches within the villages form important skyline features, including the spires of the Church of St Margaret in Stoke and St Edith's in Orton-on-the-Hill, located on hill-top positions (both Grade I listed). Occasional wind turbines form moving vertical structures visible in some views. Elevated land in the west affords expansive views beyond the county boundary.'

And:

'In areas where arable intensification has occurred, the loss of hedgerows and trees results in an open and exposed character. This is generally a rural, quiet and tranquil area, with urbanising influences limited to pylons, masts and occasional wind turbines. Traffic on the busy M/A42, A5, A444 and A447 can detract from tranquillity locally.'

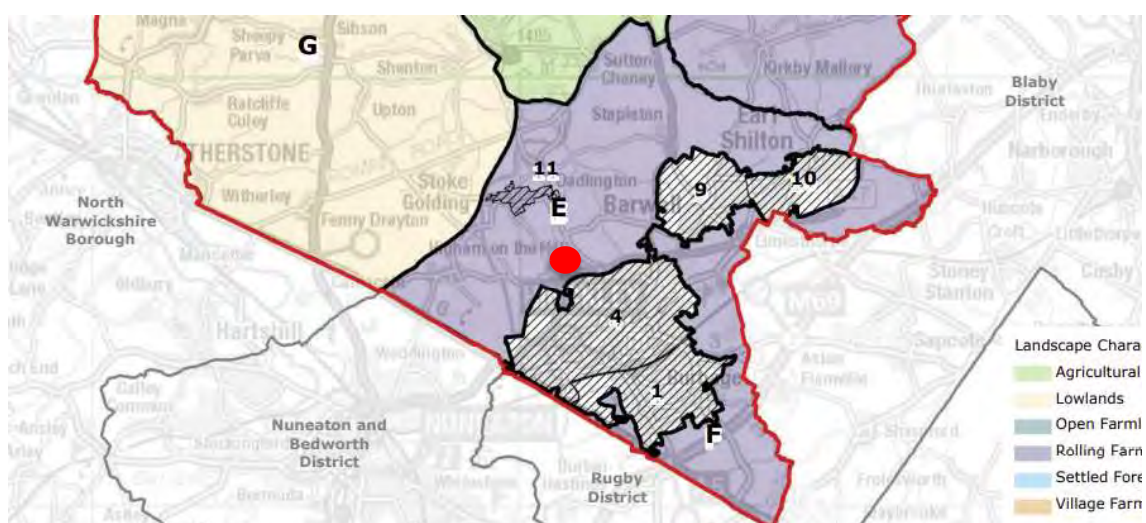


- 6.11. It is considered, that typical landscape features highlighted above are more common across the wider open countryside of the host landscape character area (which is the wider and greater scaled area of Mease/Sense Lowlands Landscape Character, rather than the smaller local landscape area of the Stoke Golding Rolling Farmlands Landscape Character Area).
- 6.12. The urban context, built form and the transient movement of vehicles along the A47 are prevailing across the site. This reinforces the perception of the site on the urban edge i.e., industrial/commercial built form off the A47 including McDonalds, Morrisons, Wickes store and officing.
- 6.13. From a landscape and town character perspective, these urban land uses definitely contribute to the site's perception as the site being situated within an urban edge setting. This land use defines a transition from open countryside (in a landscape sense) to the built edge of Hinckley. Consequently, the site has a stronger relationship with the town, rather than feeling divorced from it, in the open countryside.

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment (September 2017)

- 6.14. Guidance of the local landscape character of the area can be found in the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment, which was published in September 2017. This Supplementary Planning Guidance provides a broad scale understanding of the landscape across the Borough, setting out character types relative to the context of the site, and enable a more focussed understanding of the landscape within the study area.
- 6.15. The Local Planning Authority identifies broad Landscape Areas based on their physical, cultural, natural and perceptual characteristics. In each case the key characteristics which contribute to the Character Area's local distinctiveness and sense of place are set out, together with supporting information.
- 6.16. The LPA then break these areas down into smaller, more discrete areas, which it refers to as Landscape Types. With consideration of Figure 7 (entitled 'Landscape Character Areas and Types'), the LPA find the site to be situated wholly within the 'Stoke Golding Rolling Farmlands' Landscape Character Area, and wholly in the 'Rolling Farmlands' Landscape Type; see Image 6.3:

Image 6.3: Extract from the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment (September 2017), Figure 7 (plan entitled 'Landscape Character Areas and Types'). N.B. ZLA has marked the approximate location of the site with a red circle. The settlement of Hinckley is referenced by the LPA with the number 4. Extract taken February 2022

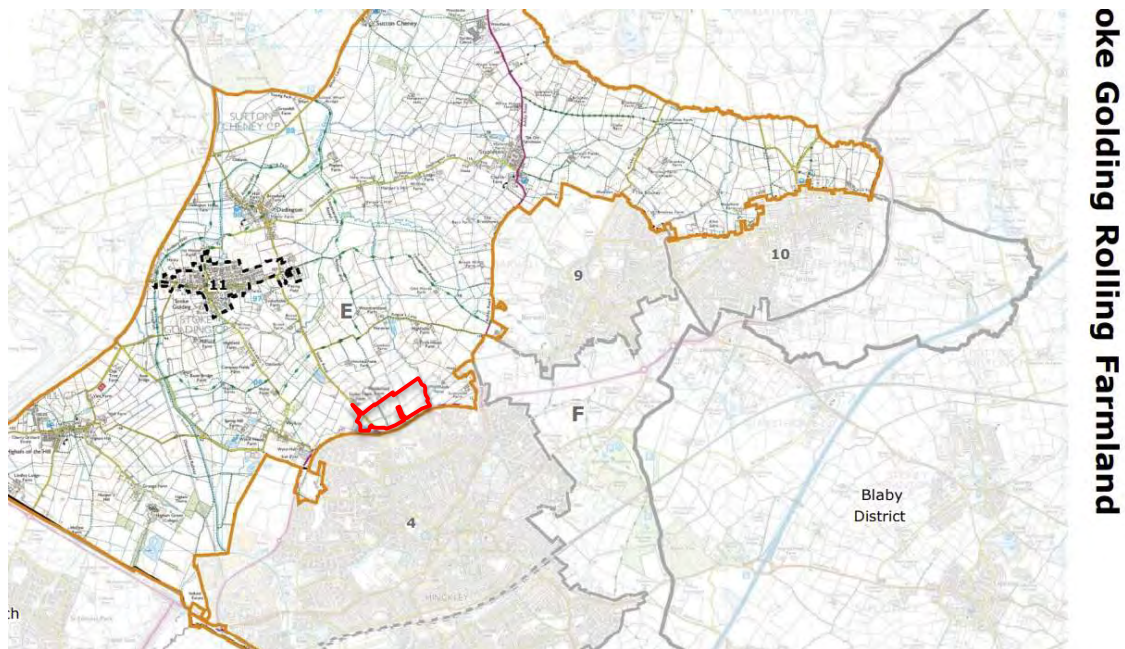


- 6.17. The Landscape Character Area and Landscape Type are examined individually below; see Appendix 11:

Stoke Golding Rolling Farmlands Landscape Character Area

- 6.18. The site adjoins Normandy Way on the urban edge of Hinckley. The site is situated wholly within this landscape character area; see Image 6.3:

Image 6.3: Extract from the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment (September 2017), page 48 (plan entitled 'Stoke Golding Rolling Farmlands Landscape Character Area'). N.B. ZLA has marked the approximate location of the site with a solid red line. Extract taken February 2022



- 6.19. The LPA describe the Stoke Golding Rolling Farmlands Landscape Character Area. N.B. ZLA has underlined those elements common to the site's context:

'a mix of arable and pasture farmland arranged in small to medium scale fields in a simple regular pattern.....Despite its proximity to the built up area of Hinckley, the area has a rural character, with little light pollution.....Hedgerows with trees and occasional woodland copses add visual interest to an otherwise open landscape. Occasional long distance views can be obtained from the high points across agricultural fields to distant horizons'.

- 6.20. The LPA continues to note the following of this landscape character area. N.B. ZLA has underlined those elements common to the site's context:

'The settlement pattern is rural: villages occupy higher land, many of which developed from former farming communities and retain agricultural influences. Villages such as Stoke Golding and Higham on the Hill have a strong sense of place and form attractive features in views across the landscape, with red brick farmhouses and cottages and attractive stone buildings in older village centres focussed around spired churches. Working farms, including some modern complexes, are situated around the settlement edge along primary routes in and out of the village. Settlements are connecting by (sometimes winding) country lanes and are lined by grass verges and low hedgerows which provide a rural setting and sense of unity to the landscape.



6.21. Given the foregoing, the site occupies an urban edge location situated off Normandy Way on the northern edge of Hinckley. Consequently, the site is overlooked by and enclosed along its south eastern and southern periphery by existing residential development, as well as commercial/employment built form on Normandy Way. It is considered, therefore, that the site is part of the transition from the urban edge to the wider open countryside.

6.22. The Local Planning Authority continues. N.B. ZLA has underlined those elements common to the site's context:

'Smaller fields are often found around settlements which can contain species-rich grassland where not given over to agricultural intensification and mature trees valuable for biodiversity. Tree cover in the wider character area is formed of mature trees within low hedgerows frequently define field boundaries, and occasional woodland clumps along small watercourses give the area a relatively wooded appearance.'

6.23. The key characteristics of the Stoke Golding Rolling Farmlands Landscape Character Area, include the following. N.B. ZLA has underlined those common to the site:

- *'Undulating arable and pasture farmland with gentle valleys sloping down to the Ashby Canal, Tweed River and associated tributaries.*
- *Small to medium scale rectilinear field pattern divided by low hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees typical of parliamentary enclosure, with smaller pasture fields around settlements, creating a largely unified field pattern and providing continuity with the agricultural past.*
- *Rural settlement pattern with former agricultural villages typically demonstrating a historic core, modern outskirts and sporadic farmsteads on the outer edges, within a strong rural setting.*
- *Historic villages occupying higher ground with attractive red brick cottages fronting onto the road and connected by rural lanes with grass verges and well-maintained hedgerows.*
- *Church spires and towers within villages in and around the character area form distinctive landmarks on the skyline.*
- *Associations with the Battle of Bosworth, particularly at Crown Hill in Stoke Golding.*
- *Ashby Canal has affiliations with coal mining that has influenced the landscape over the years and is designated as a conservation area. It is now important for biodiversity and tourism.'*

6.24. ZLA notes, that the landscape fabric within the site is less intact, than the wider open countryside beyond its boundary (particularly to the north and west of the site area). The site demonstrates few of the foregoing key characteristics. The landform, field pattern, hedgerows and scattered hedgerows trees and tree groups to the eastern edge are notable features. The site contains no development, so the influence of urban features and built form are those from the surroundings of the site through borrowed views.

6.25. In the aforementioned Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment (September 2017), the Local Planning Authority, highlight the following key sensitivities to the current intactness of the Stoke Golding Rolling Farmlands Landscape Character Area; see Appendix 10.

- *'The rural character of the landscape, despite its proximity to urban areas, and areas with little light pollution – particularly in the north of the area which create a relative sense of tranquillity compared to some other parts of the borough.'*



- *The gap between Stoke Golding and Dadlington is important in retaining the ‘village’ character and distinctiveness of the settlements.*
- *Low hedgerows and mature trees are important elements because of the relatively low level of woodland in the landscape and their role in defining historic field patterns.*
- *Distinctive character and local vernacular of the villages, including red brick and traditional buildings with links to the agricultural history of the settlements. Former farmhouses and landmark buildings contribute to the sense of place and provide historic time depth.*
- *Historic value and associations with the nearby Bosworth Battlefield.*
- *The Ashby Canal is a valued landscape asset, particularly as a recreation and biodiversity resource as well as a reminder of the areas industrial heritage*
- *Footpaths including popular recreational routes provide connections with the wider landscape.*
- *Uncluttered rural views of church spires are sensitive to change and are valued for the sense of local distinctiveness they provide.’*

6.26. Further to this, the LPA has published a number of guidelines for the management of this landscape character area:

- *‘Encourage the use of traditional ‘Midlands style’ hedgelaying to manage hedgerows, improving their structure and biodiversity value and strengthening landscape character.*
- *Maintain the rural character of the landscape. Ensure development is fully integrated into and informed by the landscape with its rural, harmonious pattern of small villages which are well-integrated in the landscape, and local vernacular styles and materials. Conserve the rural gap between Stoke Golding and Dadlington.*
- *The Sustainable Urban Extension to the north of Barwell should aim to create a distinct new and contemporary identity and character(s) whilst responding to the existing context.*
- *Maintain views to church spires and towers e.g. on the wooded skyline at Stoke Golding and long distance views to other churches in surrounding villages. Conserve rural views and setting of settlements.*
- *Maintain and enhance the recreational assets including rights of way network and canal.*
- *Maintain positive management of the Ashby Canal and seek opportunities to extend and enhance areas of wetland habitat.*
- *Create new and conserve existing notable habitats, in particular deciduous woodland and mesotrophic grassland.*
- *Encourage tree planting to regenerate mature/ veteran trees as they come to the end of their lives.*
- *Improve the integration of settlement edges such as north of Barwell, e.g. with planting and use of materials appropriate to the rural character.’*



- 6.27. The published analysis and assessment of landscape character provides a contextual appreciation of the wider landscape i.e., the surroundings to the site. However, following our more recent site-based assessment, there is a noticeable degradation of landscape fabric and character through the site area (February 2022).
- 6.28. In their Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment (September 2017), the Local Planning Authority recognises the limitations to such character assessments: *‘whilst using the Landscape Character Assessment to inform decision making, it is important to note that the boundary between one character area and the next is transitional and there is rarely a clear cut change.’* Given the site’s location on the urban edge of Hinckley, the site and its immediate context represent a ‘hinterland’ between the broad character of the Stoke Golding Rolling Farmlands Landscape Character Area, and the urban environment of the town.

Site Specific Appraisal

- 6.29. To independently assess the likely level of landscape and visual effects which the development proposals might incur will require an appropriately detailed assessment of the site itself and its immediate surroundings.
- 6.30. A qualified Landscape Architect from ZLA undertook a site-based assessment in February 2022. This assessment was undertaken in clear, dry weather conditions, and the site is described as follows.
- 6.31. Recognising that ‘landscape’ is a multi-dimensional concept embracing ‘what we see’, its time-depth and physical attributes, this LVA reviews and assesses change to landscape character in terms of the physical landscape, the site’s visual and sensory character, landscape fabric and habitats and cultural connections; see Table 6.1 and 6.2 overleaf:



Table 6.1: Site specific landscape appraisal by ZLA (February 2022)

Landscape Character and Observations	
Landscape Fabric:	ZLA considers that the landscape features and fabric of the wider Mease/Sense Lowlands Landscape Character (as per the Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study for Leicester & Leicestershire, October 2017) are broadly consistent with the wider open countryside outside of Hinckley. However, the landscape fabric within the site is less resemblant of this wider landscape Character Area, and when considered in terms of the smaller Stoke Golding Rolling Farmlands Landscape Character Area. Whilst there are common landscape features within the site, these are less intact than observed in the wider context of the site are. For instance; the site is not considered to be influenced by a rural settlement pattern of small villages, instead the site has an urban edge location with obvious residential development, industrial/commercial buildings along the A47 Normandy Road including McDonalds, Morrisons supermarket, Wickes store, officing and an industrial estate. These features combined with the existing field hedgerows and limited hedgerow trees within the site do not ‘provide a rural setting and sense of unity to the landscape.’ The most notable landscape features within the site area is its undulating landform, field hedgerows, hedgerow trees and extensive groups of trees along the A47 and the eastern site edge creating a ribbon of trees along the existing brook. From within the site area, this is very limited views northwards, and ‘occasional long distance views’ east and west from the majority of the site area. However, within many of these situation, the influence of the urban context is prevailing.
Topography:	In its general sense, landform within the site varies from 119m AOD at the approximate site centre, sloping to 106m AOD on the eastern edge with the existing brook, and 105m AOD to the west of Stoke Road. The highest land is situated within the approximate centre of the site at circa 119m AOD. Landform falls eastwards down to the existing brook which bounds the site’s eastern edge, circa 110m AOD. Landform along the south eastern to south western edge with Stokes Road (from 110m AOD to 105m AOD). The northern edge follows a similar landform. Consequently, ZLA considers that the landform within the site is that typically found within the host landscape description unit and landscape type.
Built Form:	There is no built form within the quantum of the site. The site lies on land directly adjacent to, or overlooked by multiple neighbouring residential, industrial and employment land uses, which influence the perception and experience of the site. Additionally, the effect of the A47 Normandy Way, and the associated movement of vehicles (noise and lights) substantially reduces the tranquillity of the site along its south eastern to south western periphery, rather than ‘a relative sense of tranquillity.’ Consequently, in its current situation (February 2022), there is an obvious settlement edge influence within the site.



Cultural Connection:	There is an individual Public Right of Way situated to the south western-western periphery. Consequently, there is no public access to the site. The site is outside of a National or local landscape designation. There are no Registered Parks and Gardens within the study area.
Sensory & Perceptual:	The tranquillity of the site is diminished and adversely impacted by traffic movement along the A47 Normandy Way, with the site perceived as being overlooked by existing urban development along the eastern, southern and south western edge. There is intervisibility between the site and the wider urban settlement of the Hinckley. Consequently, the site has a stronger relationship with the urban setting than the wider open countryside. From a landscape and town character perspective, these urban land uses definitely contribute to the site's perception as urban edge. The northern edge of the site, which is neighboured by an existing farmstead (Middlefield Farm) which overlooks the site, is an approximate edge between land that is clearly <i>'undulating arable and pasture farmland with gentle valleys'</i> to that which has an increasingly strong association with the town. Settlement and built form within the open countryside is typically 'sporadic farmsteads on the outer edges, within a strong rural setting.' When on site, especially in the winter months (February 2022), one is aware of the presence of the surrounding urban related uses, albeit on the edge of the town, on a strong road frontage, rather than feeling divorced from it, in the open countryside. This defines a transition from open countryside (in a landscape sense) to the built edge of Hinckley. Consequently, the site has a stronger relationship with the town rather than the wider open countryside, and perceived as having an equivalence to the neighbouring urban land uses in a spatial sense.



Table 6.2: Site specific visual appraisal by ZLA (February 2022)

Visual Amenity and Observations	
Scenic Quality:	The site is relatively long and thin and runs parallel to the A47. The site is managed for agriculture with medium rectangular fields. The existing field hedgerows are relatively broad, but gappy and outgrown within the site's interior. There are few trees situated within the open fields and limited hedgerow trees within the site's interior. The site is experienced as open, and only enclosed by the hedgerow trees (which are of limited number) and the groups of extensive trees along the eastern edge with the existing brook and along the southern edge with the A47 Normandy Way. The site is overlooked by adjoining urban land uses including existing residential development, industrial./commercial buildings including McDonalds, Morrisons supermarket, Wickes store and the wider industrial estate. Additionally, the effect of the A47 Normandy Way and the associated movement of vehicles (noise and lights) substantially reduces the tranquillity of the site along its south eastern to south western periphery. The site area is unremarkable and contributes little if anything to the wider host landscape character. The site and its setting is not scenic.
Visual Prominence:	The site is situated on the urban edge of Hinckley adjacent to the A47 Normandy Way, and overlooked by extensive urban development. The site is not divorced from the urban edge in the wider open countryside.
Skyline Character:	The site for the proposed development encloses views from the A47 Normandy Way looking north across open countryside. The landform of the site is undulating and rises around its central area. This landform is less than the height of the existing urban built form opposite the site on the A47 Normandy way, which is seen above and projecting across the site area.
Intervisibility:	There is intervisibility between the site and the urban setting along the south eastern, south and western edge of the town. There is limited intervisibility with the wider open countryside from within the site (in part due to rising landform within the site area, with the lower site areas nestling below hedgerows and the wider topography). Generally, this severs intervisibility and interconnectivity with the open countryside to the east and south, with wider views to the west. There are views to the north from the northern periphery of the site area. From views outside of the site (within the wider open countryside), the site is frequently seen in combination with the existing urban edge of Hinckley, including, existing residential development, industrial./commercial buildings including McDonalds, Morrisons supermarket, Wickes store and the wider industrial estate.



Landscape Sensitivity

- 6.32. With regard to landscape sensitivity, the susceptibility of the landscape is defined as the ability of the receptor (whether the overall character, individual fabric elements or perceptual aspects) to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation.
- 6.33. In the Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study for Leicester & Leicestershire (October 2017), the site is found to be within the regional landscape character area, the Mease/Sence Lowlands Landscape Character Area. This regional landscape character area is substantially greater than the local landscape character area (Stoke Golding Rolling Farmlands Landscape Character Area identified within the Borough study (September 2017)).
- 6.34. With consideration of the Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study for Leicester & Leicestershire, it is considered, that the Mease/Sence Lowlands Landscape Character Area has a moderate landscape sensitivity to new residential development. In this case, the LPA assumed new residential development was for up to three storey in height, for which the LPA states:
- ‘This Landscape Character Area is judged to be of moderate overall sensitivity to housing development and commercial (light industrial) developments. This is due to the ability of the landscape’s topography and woodland/tree cover to help incorporate development, and the presence of busy roads and existing modern development within some of the larger villages. However, the strongly rural qualities of many parts of the LCA, open and elevated areas with important uninterrupted views across and beyond the landscape, historic vernacular villages, valued naturalistic habitats and historic land uses (e.g. parkland) and undeveloped wooded skylines present sensitivities.’*
- 6.35. In Section 3 (Methodology) Table 3.1 entitled ‘The five-point scale of landscape sensitivity, (page 12), sensitivity is considered to range from Low, Low-Moderate, Moderate, Moderate-High and High. Moderate sensitivity is defined by this study as follows:
- ‘Some of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are sensitive to change.’*
- 6.36. It is noted, that the site area is situated on the northern edge of Hinckley. From a landscape and town character perspective, these urban land uses definitely contribute to the site’s perception as urban edge. The site areas has a less intact landscape character than the wider open countryside within the local landscape character area of the Stoke Golding Rolling Farmlands Landscape Character Area, and the wider Mease/Sence Lowlands Landscape Character. Consequently, the site area, and its immediate context is not considered to have ‘strong rural qualities’
- 6.37. The northern edge of the site, which is neighboured by an existing farmstead (Middlefield Farm) which overlooks the site, is an approximate edge between land that is clearly ‘undulating arable and pasture farmland with gentle valleys’ to that which has an increasingly strong association with the town.
- 6.38. Settlement and built form within the open countryside is typically ‘sporadic farmsteads on the outer edges, within a strong rural setting.’ Consequently, the site forms part of a transition from open countryside (in a landscape sense) to the built edge of Hinckley. Consequently, the site has a stronger relationship with the town rather than the wider open countryside.
- 6.39. Whilst the LPA consider that the host landscape quality and character are of moderate value, in our recent field-based assessment, it was judged that the site is unremarkable. The site is managed for livestock pasture. Whilst there is some level of intact typical landscape features; however, hedgerows are gappy, outgrown and degraded, there is a lack of hedgerow trees and there are no woodland spinneys or woodland blocks commonly found within this landscape character area.



- 6.40. In landscape terms, the site is unremarkable within the landscape and does not form a prominent or important part of the appreciation of the wider open countryside. The site itself lies directly adjacent to, and overlooked, by long standing and new residential development, industrial and commercial built form including three storey office developments. There is intervisibility between the site and the wider urban settlement of the Hinckley, with its landform orienting views east and west across the residential areas, and southwards across the industrial/commercial and employment built form. Consequently, the site has a stronger relationship with the urban setting than the wider open countryside beyond its boundaries.
- 6.41. Consequently, ZLA consider, that the site make a limited contribution to this host landscape character. Given the foregoing the site is considered to have, at most, a medium landscape sensitivity and a lower susceptibility to change i.e., undesignated countryside and landscape features; some distinctive landscape characteristics, but with landscape detractors.
- 6.42. In terms of landscape susceptibility to change, it is considered, that there are some distinctive landscape elements and perceptual aspects but with landscape detractors. Consequently, the landscape is able to accommodate a moderate level of change.
- 6.43. Finally, the LPA's Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study for Leicester & Leicestershire (October 2017) highlights the following attributes and features of the landscape would be particularly sensitive to development. Given our field-based assessment (February 2022), the following landscape strategies are considering pertinent to the site and its context:
- *'Elevated hills in the north-west with expansive views across this landscape and beyond (including beyond the county boundary). The flat floodplain also affords panoramic views.*
 - *Important naturalistic features within the often intensively farmed landscape including pockets of ancient woodland, wood pasture, streams, ponds, species-rich grassland and thick hedgerows.*
 - *SSSI-designated habitats at Ashby Canal, Sheepy Fields and Kendall's Meadow and an SAC designated length of the River Mease in the north of the LCA.*
 - *Nationally significant heritage features including moated sites, medieval villages, Roman remains and the nationally registered Bosworth Battlefield.*
 - *Sparse settlement pattern, with many historic villages with strong local vernacular (often designated as Conservation Areas) nestled onto wooded hilltops and ridges.*
 - *Historic church spires on the mostly undeveloped, wooded skylines.*
 - *The parkland estates of Gopsall and Bosworth, the latter forming part of the wooded setting of the historic market town of Market Bosworth.*
 - *Rural, quiet and tranquil perceptual qualities of the landscape, with limited urbanising influences.'*



7. EVALUATION OF RESIDUAL EFFECTS

Potential Effect on Landscape Character

- 7.1. Given the nature of the development proposal, it is inevitable the character of the site's interior would fundamentally change from a greenfield to that of a residential development. Such a change of landscape character should not be a detriment to the enjoyment and appreciation of the wider landscape, and should not, in and of itself, be a reason to raise an objection either by the LPA or consultees.
- 7.2. The site is situated north of Normandy Way (A47), main vehicle route, which acts as a spine road around the town of Hinckley, and connects outlying towns such as Nuneaton. The site is a relatively long and thin and runs parallel to this road leading down to Stoke Road on the western periphery of the site. Off Normandy Way, there is an extensive urban built form of residential dwellings, commercial, employment and industrial development.
- 7.3. The site is managed for livestock pasture. The interconnecting fields are delineated with mature hedgerows, which are frequently, outgrow and gappy within the site's interior, and along the northern site edge (with borders wider fields of pasture). Beyond this, there is open countryside with scattered farmsteads and isolated dwellings nestled within tree groups and vegetation.
- 7.4. However, there is frequent intervisibility between the site and the neighbouring residential development, and experienced as overlooked by a number of existing employment and industrial buildings opposite the site off Normandy Way. The combination of these building and the route of Normandy Way (A47), with its associated traffic, noise and movement, road signage and roadside facilities such as fast food facilities (McDonalds), supermarket (Morrisons store) and large retail (Wickes store) give the site an urban edge context.
- 7.5. Around the western edge of the site there is direct intervisibility with the nearby pub chain eatery, large retail (Wickes store) and sight of the wider urban area of Hinckley situated off Normandy Way (A47), albeit nestled within groups of mature trees and the vegetation parameters of the A47 route.
- 7.6. Given the foregoing, the site has a strong relationship with the urban environment, rather than the wider open countryside, which is experienced as beyond the site, its landform and enclosed field boundaries. Consequently, the site is experienced as part of the hinterland, the transition between the urban environment and the open countryside, and perceived as having an equivalence to the neighbouring urban land uses in a spatial sense.

Construction Effects

- 7.7. Construction activities, movement of site traffic, lighting, noise, and dust would be present during the construction process. This is not unusual and would be carefully controlled by a conditioned construction method statement. Recommendations for protection of the retained trees and hedgerows, in accordance with relevant British Standards such as BS 5837: 2012, would ensure the rooting areas of the trees and hedgerows are not adversely affected by the construction process.
- 7.8. The magnitude of change would however be substantial through a considerable alteration to key features of the landscape character within the site, resulting in a substantial change to the baseline condition. When combined with the medium landscape sensitivity of the site, would result in a major/moderate adverse level of effect. However, this level of effect would not be permeant extending only for the duration of the construction process in the worst-case scenario.



Year 1 and 15 ('Operation')

- 7.9. Following construction and the establishment of the landscape strategy, existing landscape fabric and new landscaping will be managed in accordance with an appropriate landscape management plan, or similar, to ensure the longevity of the green infrastructure as part of the development.
- 7.10. Apart from minor re-grading (for building footprints and attenuation ponds), the site will remain physically similar to the baseline and would not require extensive land remodelling. The development would result in a complete variance to the existing character of the site's ground cover. However, the development proposal has retained and integrated areas of existing hedgerow, and the small number of existing trees presently on the site.
- 7.11. These features are predominantly situated in the southern half of the site and along the southern site boundary with the existing brook neighbouring the site), and would be effectively protected during the construction phase and enhanced with new planting of locally important species, to restore and enhance the existing landscape fabric.
- 7.12. Additionally, the landscape mitigation measures integrated within the Illustrative Layout (see Section 2 paragraph 2.25) would establish new landscape infrastructure across the wider site area enhancing existing weak fabric, enhancing degraded hedgerow, providing further hedgerows and typical hedgerow tree, copse and woodland spinney planting, as well as creating extensive green corridors through the developed site areas.
- 7.13. New tree planting and the establishment of green corridors through the site with elements of green and blue infrastructure will reinforce the perceived tree cover to break up the development mass and filter views of the proposed built form.
- 7.14. Proposed landscaping through the development would feature the provision of species-rich grassland to replace the previous livestock pasture, as well as establishing native structure planting, field margins, scrubland and areas of specimen tree and orchard planting with wildflower meadows. In combination, the foregoing aims to create a mosaic of landscape and habitat for amenity value, biodiversity as well as landscape mitigation measures to integrate the proposed development scenario, rather than providing extensive landscape buffers to otherwise mitigate a poorly located and badly designed scheme.
- 7.15. In the first year, the prevailing characteristic would be the new development, roads and lighting, whilst the proposed trees, ground cover and hedgerow would still be in relative infancy within a wider mature landscape setting through retained landscape fabric within the site. With the cessation of construction activities, the magnitude of change would reduce from substantial to moderate. This would yield a moderate adverse level of effect when combined with the medium sensitivity of the site.
- 7.16. By year 15, and the maturation of the landscape features, with tree and structure planting, as well as along the green corridors through the site, make an obvious contribution to the character of the site where they are able to grow more freely within the landscape buffer areas. This contributes to a reduction of impacts to slight, resulting in a moderate/minor adverse level of effect. The effect is permanent.

Predicted Effects on Landscape Character

- 7.17. The area immediately surrounding the site would be subject to the greatest change to the defined host landscape character types. The site has an urban edge setting and the predicted effect of the proposed scheme is expected to diminish considerably just a short distance into the surrounding area.



7.18. The effects on the immediate surrounding and the wider area are described as follows:

Stoke Golding Rolling Farmlands Landscape Character Area

- 7.19. The site is enclosed by the A47 Normandy Way and Stoke Road running along the south and western site boundaries, which has a detrimental effect on tranquillity within the site. Furthermore, the site is enclosed by existing residential development, and extensive industrial/commercial and employment buildings to the south of the A47 Normandy Way.
- 7.20. Within these views, the urban context, built form and the transient movement of vehicles along the A47 is prevailing which reinforces the perception of the site on the urban edge. In these situations, there is intervisibility between the site and the industrial/commercial built form off the A47 including McDonalds, Morrisons, Wickes store and officing. From a landscape and town character perspective, these urban land uses definitely contribute to the site's perception as urban edge.
- 7.21. The site is enclosed along its eastern edge by extensive groups of trees and native scrub running along the existing brook like a ribbon of vegetation. This is noted within the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment (September 2017) as a typical feature, with the *'occasional woodland clumps along small watercourses give the area a relatively wooded appearance.'*
- 7.22. The Stoke Golding Rolling Farmlands Landscape Character Area is typically characterised by *'undulating arable and pasture farmland with gentle valleys'*, *'tree cover in the wider character area is formed of mature trees within low hedgerows frequently define field boundaries'* with *'smaller pasture fields around settlements'*. However, despite the quantum of the site, there is a lack of woodland blocks, with existing hedgerows degraded and outgrown within the site and a distinct lack of tree cover within hedgerows.
- 7.23. However, the southern boundary is enclosed with mature field hedgerows and extensive groups of broadleaf trees, which is less of a commonly found feature which is typical of the Stoke Golding Rolling Farmlands Landscape Character Area, and associated with the mitigation of the A47 Normandy Way roadway.
- 7.24. This Landscape Character Area is noted by the Local Planning Authority as *'rural settlement pattern with former agricultural villages typically demonstrating a historic core, modern outskirts and sporadic farmsteads on the outer edges, within a strong rural setting.'* The combination of the A47 Normandy Way, Stoke Road, residential development, the industrial estate, commercial and employment development creates a *'modern outskirts'* context for the site rather than a *'strong rural setting'*.
- 7.25. Furthermore, its noted that the LPA states: *'settlements are connecting by (sometimes winding) country lanes and are lined by grass verges and low hedgerows which provide a rural setting and sense of unity to the landscape.'* Whilst this situation is prevailing along Stoke Road and Rogues Lane away from the site, the influence of the site's urban context is prevailing along Stoke Road, and the typically *'rural setting and sense of unity to the landscape'*, is less intact on Stoke Road as it approaches the site, and the outer edge of Hinckley, so much so the character of the A47 Normandy Way is not reflective of this character at all. This particularly the case, when also considering the visual influence of existing built form along the A47 Normandy Way, and the island around Stoke Road and the A47 Normandy Way with obvious, large scale development discernible across the wider landscape.
- 7.26. In this sense, the site has limited intact features of the host Landscape Character Area. Additionally, the influence of the adjoining urban edge appears is prevailing since the 2017 assessment undertaken by the Local Planning Authority. Consequently, the site has a stronger relationship with the urban setting than the wider open countryside.



- 7.27. Beyond the site, across the wider open countryside the *'settlement pattern is rural: villages occupy higher land, many of which developed from former farming communities and retain agricultural influences.'* Consequently, the site is experienced as part of a hinterland, whereby there a transition from open countryside (in a landscape sense) to the built edge of Hinckley.
- 7.28. Given the development proposals, the site will be changed from open agricultural fields of pasture to become part of the built settlement, adopting similar characteristics of built form within the site's immediate context. A change of landscape character is inevitable following a change in land use, as proposed within the site, but it should not be seen as a detriment to the enjoyment and appreciation of the wider landscape. Indeed, such a change in the context of residential development within green field locations is unavoidable, and should not, in and of itself, be a reason to raise an objection either by the LPA or consultees.
- 7.29. Furthermore, the proposed development would introduce a variety of native, valuable soft landscape elements and features, which would positively contribute to the character of the area, as well as integrating green infrastructure into the overall scheme, which will be appropriately maintained for longevity.
- 7.30. These landscape mitigation measures (see Section 2 paragraph 2.25 of this LVA) will integrate the proposed development into its setting, and would reflect the impression of the existing, and no doubt more recent residential development surrounding the site. In their Landscape Character Assessment public in 2017, the Local Planning Authority noted that 'hedgerows and mature trees are important elements' and 'mature trees within low hedgerows frequently define field boundaries, and occasional woodland clumps along small watercourses give the area a relatively wooded appearance.' These features have been integrated as part of the landscape mitigation and enhancement measures for the scheme, and through appropriate design would ensure 'occasional long distance views can be obtained from the high points across agricultural fields to distant horizons'
- 7.31. Careful street alignment and the considered siting of the new public open spaces and green corridors will maintain a strong visual and sensory link with the wider surrounding rural hinterland. The existing boundary hedgerows and trees will be retained, buffered, strengthened and appropriately managed for longevity. Additional tree planting around and within the proposed development will add to the landscape fabric and biodiversity value, as will the SUDs attenuation basins. The creation of a network of attenuation features would be a beneficial effect on hydrology (as well as habitat and visual amenity), and new woodland blocks or spinney as found locally would further promote and enhance the landscape character.
- 7.32. Consequently, the character of this Landscape Character Area at the site, and within its immediate surrounding, is already partly eroded by the effect of the A47 Normandy Way route, and an overall lack of upkeep for native hedgerows and hedgerow tree planting, the prevailing settlement edge and (overlooked by) residential dwellings, as well as extensive employment, industrial built form and road side facilities which neighbour the site. Consequently, the site represents a hinterland between the urban land uses and the wider open countryside.
- 7.33. The addition of housing at the site, would reduce the spatial openness of the land between Hinckley and outlying villages in the wider open countryside. However, the site would be experienced against the backdrop of Hinckley. Consequently, the site would be experienced as part of the settlement, and the adjoining land uses and robust physical features sever the site from the wider open countryside, with new landscaping and green infrastructure forming a setting, with which, the future development scenario would nestle within.



- 7.34. Typically, the core areas of new structural tree planting within the public open spaces and green corridors would comprise standards interplanted with an understorey of whips. Allowing for this size at planting, construction and Year 1 effects would be relatively similar, with mitigation provided by the retained landscape fabric. The residual effect in the long-term would however be moderated as the trees and hedgerows mature, particularly on the western boundary of the development. Hedgerows are expected to become well established in three to five years with appropriate management, and trees planted as standards (typically 3.5–4m tall) would have reached around 9m in height after 15 years. Accordingly, there will be a gradual reduction in the magnitude of change.
- 7.35. The proposed development will introduce a modest level of built residential development to these open agricultural fields, changing the perceptual and sensory characteristics of this part of the site from green field (within the hinterland between Hinckley and the open countryside) to that of urban development within this transitional area.
- 7.36. New public open spaces and green infrastructure will allow additional publicly accessible locations, which in combination with the development to effectively integrate the development with landscape features that reinforce local landscape character, and effectively offset and reduce the effects of the proposed scheme.
- 7.37. The overall change on the Stoke Golding Rolling Farmlands Landscape Character Area directly following completion in Year 1 would lead to a discernible change to the landscape of the site area. However, the underlying landscape composition would be similar to the current baseline surrounding the settlement edge along the northern edge of Hinckley off Normandy Way, and around that of Ashby Road which is well vegetated, extensively treed with built form integrated within a similar urban edge hinterland setting. Overall, this would lead to a moderate effect, which would be adverse and limited to a relatively small geographical area. This level of effect would diminish rapidly with distance from the site, and the establishment and maturation of new landscaping.
- 7.38. By the year 15, the residual effect on this landscape type would be influenced extensively by the establishment and maturation of new landscape fabric at the site. The growth of new hedgerows and trees, the enhancement of, and ongoing management of existing hedgerows and trees and encouragement of species diversity through gapping up, and the maturation of woodland blocks, significant tree and orchard planting is expected to strengthen the contribution these features make to the character of this part of the host landscape character area.
- 7.39. This would lead to a negligible magnitude of change, which when combined with the medium overall sensitivity (in the worst-case scenario), would reduce the level of effect to minor adverse and permanent. There would however be an incremental reduction in the level of effect as these features – the trees in particular – mature and make a more noticeable contribution to local landscape character. Consequently, this level of effect would diminish even further with distance from the site. These effects are residual and permanent.

Predicted Effects on Visual Amenity

- 7.40. An assessment of effects on each representative viewpoint has been undertaken, and a summary of the result contained in Table 7.1 overleaf. See Appendix 6 for representative Viewpoints 1-10.



Table 7.1: Summary of Visual Effects on Representative Viewpoints

View-point	Receptor Type	Visual Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effect
1.	View from Stoke Road north of the site <i>N.B. See also Viewpoint 1 Photomontage contained in Appendix 7 of this LVA</i>	Medium	Substantial (construction) Moderate (Yr1) Slight (Yr15)	Major/moderate, adverse Moderate, adverse Moderate/minor. adverse
2.	View from PRow (LPA ref: T60/2) situated to the north of the site looking south <i>N.B. See also Viewpoint 2 Photomontage contained in Appendix 7 of this LVA</i>	High	Moderate (construction) Slight (Yr1) Negligible (Yr 15)	Major/moderate, adverse Moderate, adverse Moderate/minor, adverse
3.	View from PRow (LPA ref: U33/3) situated on the settlement edge of Stapleton (outlying village to Hinckley) across long range distance	High	Imperceptible (construction) Imperceptible (Yr1) Imperceptible (Yr 15)	No discernible effect No discernible effect No discernible effect
4.	View from PRow (LPA ref: U43/1) situated on the urban edge along Ashby Road to the east – north east of the site	High	Imperceptible (construction) Imperceptible (Yr1) Imperceptible (Yr 15)	No discernible effect No discernible effect No discernible effect
5.	View from the settlement edge at the junction of A47 Normandy Way and Drake Way. The viewpoint is situated on local cycle route along Normandy Way	Medium	Substantial (construction) Moderate (Yr1) Slight (Yr15)	Major/moderate, adverse Moderate, adverse Moderate/minor. adverse



View-point	Receptor Type	Visual Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effect
6.	View from the settlement edge at A47 Normandy Way and Drake Way. The viewpoint is situated on local cycle route along Normandy Way	Medium	Slight (construction) Slight (Yr 1) Negligible (Yr 15)	Moderate/minor, adverse Moderate/minor, adverse Minor, adverse
7.	View from Public Footpath (LPA ref: U41/1) situated west-south west of the site in open countryside around the village of Wykin	High	Moderate (construction) Slight (Yr1) Negligible (Yr 15)	Major/moderate, adverse Moderate, adverse Moderate/minor, adverse
8.	View from Public Footpath (LPA ref: U3/3) situated west of the site in pen countryside	High	Imperceptible (construction) Imperceptible (Yr1) Imperceptible (Yr 15)	No discernible effect No discernible effect No discernible effect
9.	View from Public Footpath (LPA ref: U39/1) situated north west of the site in pen countryside <i>N.B. See also Viewpoint 9 Photomontage contained in Appendix 7 of this LVA</i>	High	Slight (construction) Negligible (Yr 1) Negligible (Yr 15)	Moderate, adverse Moderate/minor, adverse Moderate/minor, adverse
10.	View from Public Footpath (LPA ref: U2/1) situated on the south eastern edge of Dadlington (outlying village to Hinckley) across long range distance	High	Imperceptible (construction) Imperceptible (Yr1) Imperceptible (Yr 15)	No discernible effect No discernible effect No discernible effect



Visual Effect on users of Public Rights of Way (Close Range)

- 7.41. There is a limited network of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) situated within close range of the site. There is no PRoW between the site and the Ashby Road to the east, and with the urban area of Hinckley to the south, there is no PRoW by which there is a direct line of sight of the site's interior. Also, there is no PRoW within open countryside to the south west-west of the site across this close range distance.
- 7.42. There is a small network of PRoW situated off Rogue Lane to the north of the site. These PRoW connect Hinckley with the wider open countryside, and interconnect with the wider open countryside passing and to/from the urban area of Hinckley town.
- 7.43. ZLA selected PRoW (LPA ref: T60/2) situated approximately 0.3km north of the site (see Viewpoint 2, Appendix 6). This representative viewpoint is situated at a similar landform to the higher elements of the site area (circa 116m AOD). Whilst the site is not seen wholesale by PRoW users progressing along this route due to the screening effect of intervening field hedgerows and hedgerow trees in the foreground, and landform undulating down to the east; see Viewpoint 2 (Appendix 6).
- 7.44. As demonstrated by Viewpoint 2, there is discernibility of the western areas of the site at a similar landform to the PRoW, albeit a good proportion of this site area is screened by extensive hedgerow trees. None the less, this area of the site would be seen in combination with the existing urban built form along the A47 Normandy Way, and the wider urban area with residential built form south of the A47 Normandy Way.
- 7.45. The build out of new homes would have a discernible effect from this location due to the effect of noise, vibration and construction light pollution. This effect would be temporary and non-permanent; see Viewpoint 2 Photomontage contained in Appendix 7 of this LVA.
- 7.46. On the cessation of the construction stage. There would be elements of the new built form which may be discernible. Given intensity and maturity of the intervening landscape fabric, as well as the extensive width of setting development within the site area, this is likely to be restricted to the upper floors and roofline.
- 7.47. It is considered, that like the current baseline situation, the development scenario would not be seen wholesale, especially when the effect of green corridors dividing the scheme up spatially with green infrastructure. None the less, might new built form be discernible, new dwellings would be experienced against the wider backdrop of the urban edge where existing dwellings, industrial and commercial development (up to three storey) are seen neighbouring the site along the A47 Normandy Way; see Viewpoint 2 Photomontage contained in Appendix 7 of this LVA.
- 7.48. The result effect would be Moderate, adverse at Year 1 reducing in magnitude of change through the establishment and maturation of tree planting within the proposed scheme which bolster the existing landscape fabric and substantially filter the proposed scheme from view. Additionally, there would be new green infrastructure and tree planting within the western edge of the site (east of Stoke Road) and also within the field area west of Stoke Road.
- 7.49. New built residential built form is set back from Stoke Road by approximately 100 metres. This area would enable tree planting and extensive green infrastructure thus reducing the overall discernibility of change within the site from Year 1 and residually. The resultant level of effect would be less than significant residually at moderate/minor, adverse. This is a permanent effect; see Viewpoint 2 Photomontage contained in Appendix 7 of this LVA.



Visual Effect on users of Public Rights of Way (Medium Range)

- 7.50. Across a medium range distance of the site, the PRoW network is predominantly situated west and north west of the site, beyond Stoke Road. This PRoW network passes through similar landform (or greater) to that of the site. PRoW pass through open countryside with nucleated farmsteads and scattered dwellings. Wykin is an outlying village situated within 1km of the site.
- 7.51. ZLA selected two representative viewpoints. Viewpoint 7 is situated on PRoW (LPA ref: U41/1) which is approximately 0.9km west of the site. The viewpoint is situated within open countryside on the edge of Wykin village. Intervening field boundaries are divided by robust hedgerows and extensive broadleaf hedgerow trees, including Oak; see Viewpoint 7 (Appendix 6). The wider village edge is vegetated and enclosed as is typical of the host landscape character area.
- 7.52. Viewpoint 9 is situated on PRoW (LPA ref: U39/1) which is o similar distance from the site (approximately 0.85km north west). This viewpoint is situated within open countryside west of Stoke Road.
- 7.53. In both these situations, during winter months (February 2022), the site is not seen wholesale due to landform sloping eastwards. The quantum of the site that is discernible, is significantly filtered by hedgerow trees, which, when in leaf during spring and summer, would substantially filter the site from direct view. For example, see Viewpoint 9 Photomontage comntained in Appendix 7 of this LVA.
- 7.54. Where the site is discernible it is seen against the wider urban backdrop of Hinckley. The existing two and three storey office buildings, the large scale buildings of Morrisons supermarket and Wickes store are all seen in combination with the site area. Development at the site would extend development in the view, but not fundamentally alter the character of the baseline view.
- 7.55. The character of the fields within the site area would change to that of a settled landscape. However, through the adoption of the extensive stand off from Stoke Road with extensive tree planting and green infrastructure, the development would be filtered by this new tree planting and nestle within the new landscape area; see Viewpoint 9 Photomontage comntained in Appendix 7 of this LVA.
- 7.56. Additionally, the extensive green infrastructure, public open space and substantial green corridors through the development would break up the development mass. From these long range distances, the scheme would appear as a series of small neighbourhoods within an open setting vegetated with strong field hedgerows and native tree planting.
- 7.57. On cessation of the construction stage, and establishment and maturation of the proposed landscaping and green infrastructure, whilst the area would be experienced as settled and developed, there would be a perception of openness, and residual effects would be less than significant; see Viewpoint 9 Photomontage comntained in Appendix 7 of this LVA.

Visual Effect on users of Public Rights of Way (Long Range)

- 7.58. To the north and north east of the site, there is little, if any, discernibility of the site; see Viewpoint 3 and 10 (Appendix 6). These representative viewpoints are situated on the edge of outlying settlements (Stapleford and Dadlington respectively). These viewpoints were situated on landform relative to the site area.
- 7.59. The effect of intervening mature landscape features, including hedgerows, hedgerow trees and woodland blocks create substantially filters views of the site. The proposed development would be indiscernible across the intervening distance.
- 7.60. Viewpoint 4 (Appendix 6) is representative of the visual amenity for PRoW users progressing along PRoW (LPA ref: U43/1), which is in open countryside on the urban edge of Hinckley and Barwell, approximately 0.65km north east.



- 7.61. The combination of the intervening landform, and the topography of the site is sufficient to screen the site, whilst the intervening hedgerows and mature hedgerow oak trees is sufficient to screen the proposed development. Further to this, the setting back of development from the northern site edge would position new built form within lower landform, the northern boundary will be enhanced with new tree planting and the formation of woodland spinneys along the periphery of the site, will further mitigate the proposal from view.
- 7.62. The proposed development would be indiscernible during its construction, initial occupation at Year 1, and residually.
- 7.63. Viewpoint 8 is situated on the edge of outlying settlement High-on-the-Hill, which is approximately 2.5km west of the site. The PRoW (LPA ref: U3/3) is situated at similar landform to the site area. The site is substantially screened by extensive tree groups along Hinckley Road, the well tree'd, vegetated edge around the village of Wykin, and intervening residential dwellings and farmsteads. The proposed development would be indiscernible during its construction, initial occupation at Year 1, and residually.

Visual Effect on Users of Public Roads

- 7.64. **Rogues Lane (approximately 0.9km north of the site at its closest location):** The residual effect of the scheme is unlikely to be imperceptible given the effect of existing landform, robust hedgerows and the mature tree components along the route of Rogues Lane. Furthermore, the setting back of development from the northern site edge would position new built form within lower landform, the northern boundary will be enhanced with new tree planting and the formation of woodland spinneys along the periphery of the site, will further mitigate the proposal from view.
- 7.65. **Stoke Road (local minor route) approaching Hinckley passing the western site area:** The residual effect of the scheme is unlikely to be imperceptible given the effect of existing landform, and the mature tree components along the route. Furthermore, the standing development back from this route by approximately 100 metres and the establishment of extensive tree groups and wider green infrastructure would substantially filter new development; see Viewpoint 1 Photomontage contained in Appendix 7 of this LVA.
- 7.66. **A47 Normandy Way passing the southern edge of the site:** Residually, the eastern edge of the scheme would be discernible, with the wider scheme nestled in extensive landscaping, woodland planting and substantial green corridors. The combined effect of this landscape strategy would be to break up the mass of development so it would be experienced as sequential neighbourhoods, and consequently, it is unlikely the whole development would be experienced from this route. Rather, its users would experience the scheme as individual neighbourhoods, distinctly separated by those landscape features commonly found in the open countryside north of Nuneaton.
- 7.67. Along the A47 Normandy Way, the addition of this new built form would serve to only extend and enlarge the existing urban character of this route by providing new housing to both sides of the roadway. Users of the roadway would be passing from and into an existing urban area and the sight of two storey dwellings (of similar height to those surrounding south east and south west of the site and discernible along the route of the A47) would not be incongruous. The proposed development would not fundamentally alter the character of the baseline views.

Visual Effects on Dwellings and Settlements

- 7.68. It should be noted that while visual amenity of residents within their private dwellings/curtilage is not protected, their 'residential amenity' generally is. Residential receptors are generally considered to be of high sensitivity to changes in the view, but their rights to any particular view, or quality of view, is not protected in planning policy at any level.



- 7.69. On balance, and given the settlement edge character of the site, the limited extent of dwellings affected to an elevated degree is proportionally small, with only a small handful experiencing a prominent change to outlooks from their properties. In all instances, the design of the proposals has sought to ensure the change is within acceptable parameters when considering residential amenity.
- 7.70. Further to this, the development proposal (see the Illustrative Masterplan in Appendix 2) has developed a number of landscape mitigation measures to reduce and offset the visual effects of the scheme, whilst also promoting landscape character, amenity benefit, ecological betterment and habitat creation. Landscape mitigation measures are detailed in Section 3 of this LVA. N.B. As well as a number of imbedded mitigation measures within the Illustrative Layout through its iterative development.
- 7.71. At Year 1, there may be opportunity to see new houses, roads and juvenile planting (within the retained landscape fabric). These new features would be seen against the wider backdrop of urban edge, and not fundamentally alter the current (baseline) view.
- 7.72. At Year 15, the residual effect would be reduced through the establishment of landscape mitigation planting with new tree and hedgerow planting becoming established and mature. The resulting level of effect would be less than significant and permanent.
- 7.73. Furthermore, the siting of the proposed development, and its massing and density has been developed iteratively with the undertaking of our field-based assessment for this LVA. Our field based assessments were undertaken during the winter-time (February 2022) and have influenced the masterplanning. The result of this collaborative working has also brought forward a number of mitigation measures imbedded within the site's design to reduce and offset visual effects. N.B. See Section 3 of this LVA for imbedded mitigation measures and proposed landscape mitigation measures.
- 7.74. With respect to the impacts on visual openness, it is not considered that any specific views valued highly by the general public or essential to the appreciation of the area (in terms of openness or otherwise), would be unduly harmed by the proposed development. Whilst the development would evidently impact openness at the site level, when the proposals are viewed in the context of the wider landscape, there remains an open character, with built development (including the proposals) appearing spatially appropriate given current development patterns.
- 7.75. The new development as proposed would be seen against the wider urban edge setting of Hinckley, including long-standing development at along the A47 Normandy Way including employment and commercial development (including McDonalds, Morrisons supermarket, Wickes store), the wider industrial estate and the surrounding residential neighbourhoods. Consequently, views from the urban edge of Nuneaton would not be fundamentally altered by the proposed development. On establishment and maturation, this new landscape will reduce the discernibility of then proposal, breaking up its mass and provide a mature landscape environment for the integration of the development proposal.
- 7.76. With regard to settlement outlying to Hinckley (and the northern edge of the town), ZLA considered that there would be little, if any discernible change to views from residential groups at Higham-on-the-Hill (see Viewpoint 8, Appendix 6), Wykin (Viewpoint 7 and 9, Appendix 6), as well as Stapelton and Dadlington to the north (see Viewpoint 3 and 10, Appendix 6 respectively).
- 7.77. The effect of intervening mature landscape features, including hedgerows, hedgerow trees and woodland blocks create substantially filters views of the site; for instance, Viewpoint 3 and 8 (Appendix 6). Where the site is discernible it is seen against the urban setting of Hinckley, and in combination with built form along Stoke Road; for instance, Viewpoint 1 and 9, Appendix 6. Consequently, the development proposal would not fundamentally alter the character of the baseline view, rather it is extending the existing urban features within the landscape setting, within which, built form will nestled and integrated; see Viewpoint 1 and 9 Photomontages contained in Appendix 7 of this LVA.



- 7.78. Additionally, the maturation of the proposed broadleaf tree planting within green corridors planned through the development, green infrastructure and public open spaces would further substantially filter, if not screen the built form of the proposed development; see Viewpoint 1, 7 and 9 (Appendix 6).
- 7.79. Overall, there would be opportunity to see the proposed development locally to the site, and the scheme would create localised effects on visual amenity from surrounding residential areas. Consequently, where the development be discernible, the newly built form would be seen against the existing residential dwellings and wider built form off the A47 Normandy Way (and the wider townscape). However, might the proposed development be discernible, the baseline view would not be fundamentally altered, and the effect of established (and maturing) landscape features to filter the scheme and contribute to its integration into this built setting.

