



Landscape and Visual Impact Frog Hall Farm, Sheepy Magna

David Hickie Associates

Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning
Arlington House, 7 Hunters Walk
Witherley, Atherstone, Warwickshire
CV9 3SU
Tel: 01827 722153

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Report Author:

Dr David Hickie BSc(Hons), MA ,PhD, CMLI, CEnv, ASLA, MIEMA, IHBC

Principal Consultant: David Hickie Associates

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been carried out by David Hickie Associates for the proposed residential development at Frog Hall Farm, Crow Lane, Sheepy Magna, CV9 3QX.

1.2 The purpose of this LVA study is to provide an assessment of the likely landscape and visual effects of the proposed development. The landscape and visual effects have been considered in relation to the proposals detailed in the planning application drawings and Design and Access Statement (DAS).

1.3 David Hickie Associates is a multi-disciplinary environmental and design consultancy established over 15 years, with expertise in architecture, landscape, ecology, arboriculture, urban design, master-planning and environmental impact assessment. The practice is a member of the Landscape Institute and Institute of Historic Building Conservation and is frequently called upon to provide expert evidence on landscape and visual issues at Planning Inquiries and as an expert for High Court Cases.

1.4 Dr David Hickie is a specialist in the field of landscape design, landscape planning and landscape ecology. He has over 35 years' experience providing expert landscape advice for a variety of complex projects, involving landscape characterisation, landscape assessment, visual impact assessment and landscape ecology. In 1995, he was a

member of the Landscape Institute's initial Working Group that developed the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (First Edition)'. He is the author of national landscape and visual impact assessment and habitat restoration guidelines prepared for the Environment Agency, and is a leading academic researcher and writer in the field of LVIA and EIA.

Site Location

1.5 Figure 1 below shows the location of the site, which is situated in the open countryside to the west of Sheepy Magna, and is accessed via a farm track off Crow Lane and Sheepy Road. A small bungalow lies to the east of the existing farmhouse and farmstead, which is in separate ownership.

Figure 1: Site Location



1.6 The context of the site is shown in the following Figures 2 and 3.

Figure 2: Wider Context of Proposals

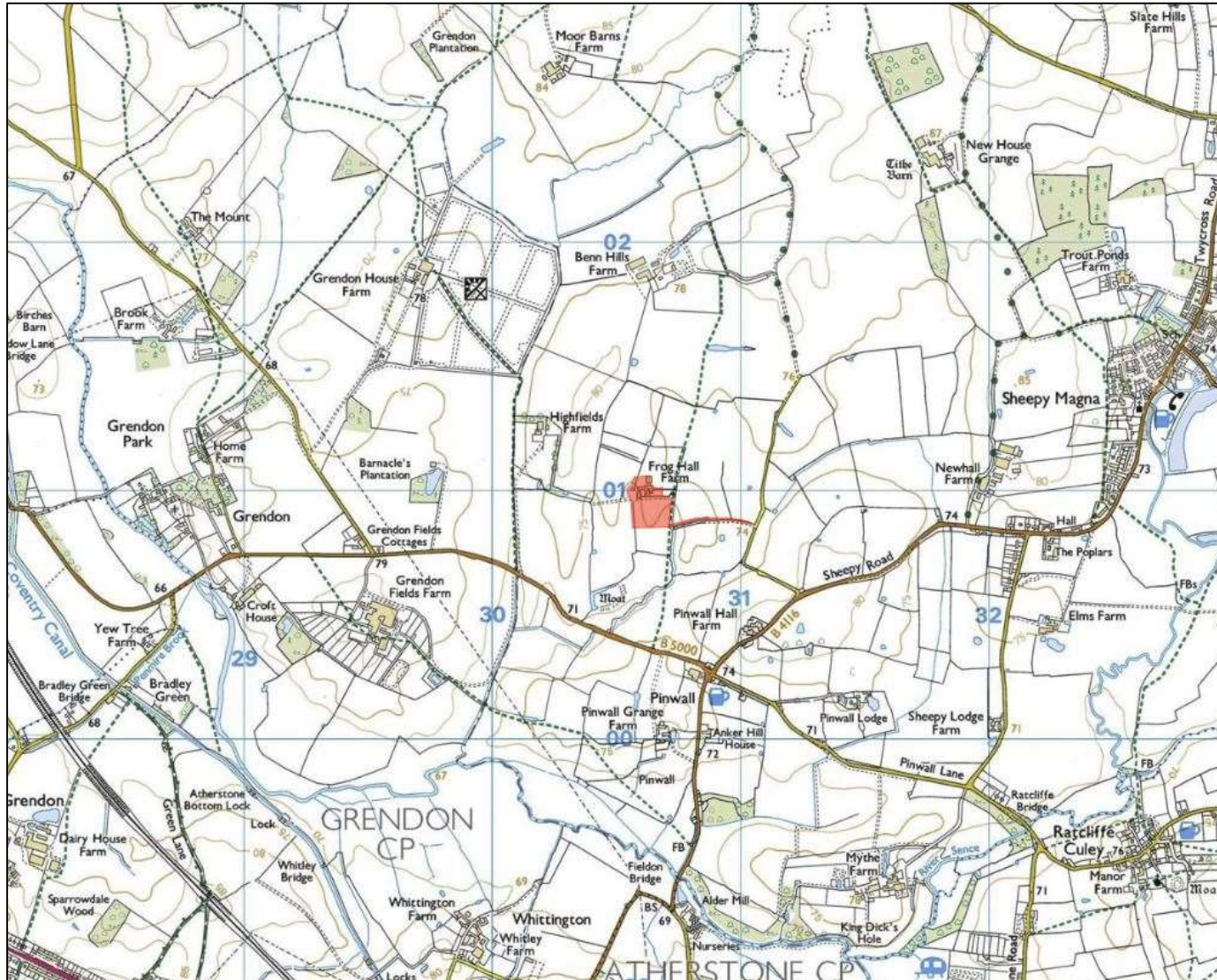


Figure 3: Aerial View of Context of Proposals



Proposed Development

1.7 The proposed development consists of the demolition of the existing dilapidated farmhouse, outbuildings and all of the agricultural buildings, and the erection of a new single, family home.

Figure 4: View of Existing Disused Farmstead



Figure 6: Plan View of Proposed New Family Home

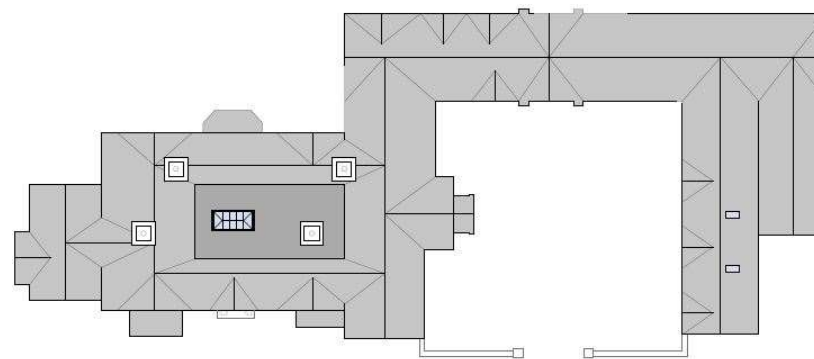


Figure 7: Illustration of Proposed House in Mature Setting



Figure 5: Proposed Front Elevation View of New Family Farmhouse



Figure 8: Plan showing Proposed Landscape Master Plan

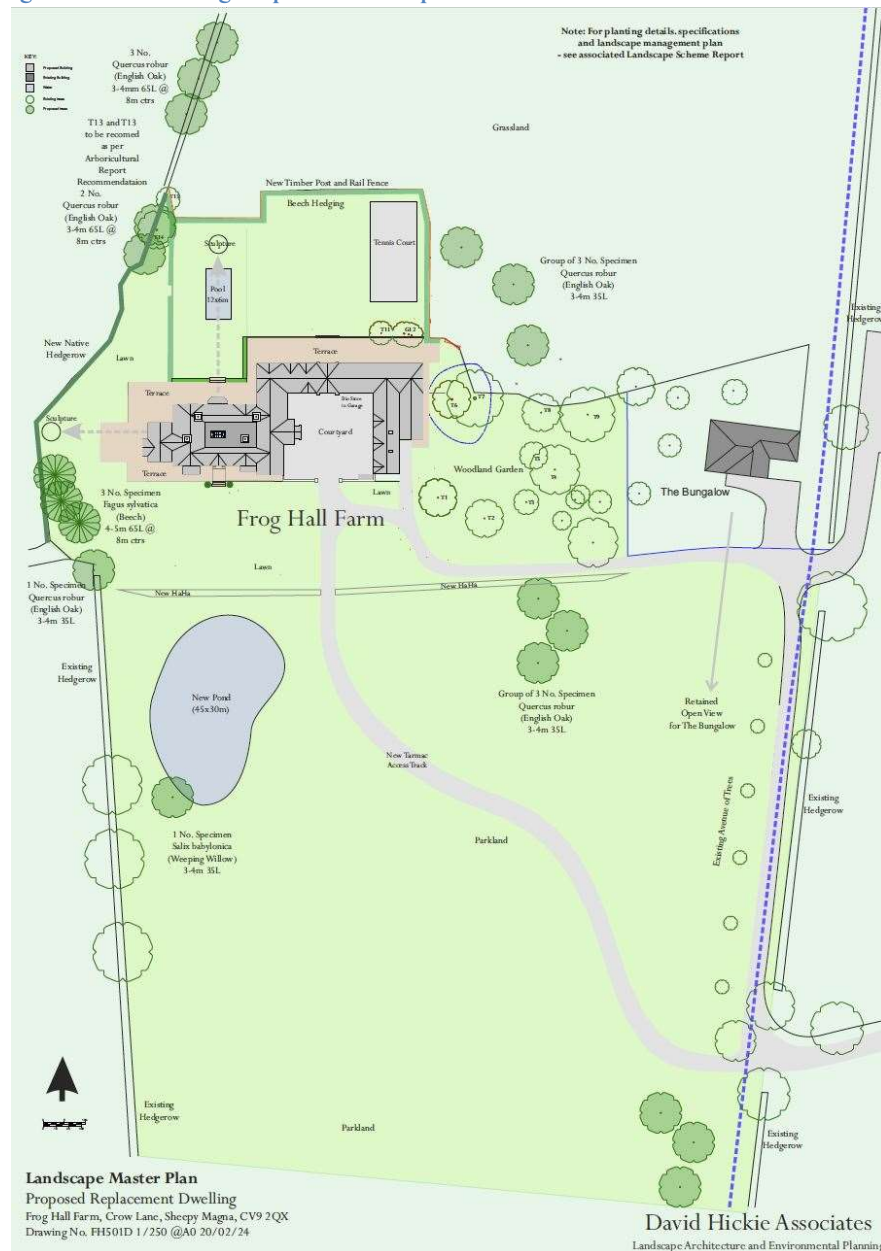


Figure 9: Plan showing comparison of Existing Farmhouse and Farm Buildings and new Single Farmhouse



Existing Farmhouse and Associated Buildings

Figure 10: View of Rear of Existing Farmhouse



Figure 11: Farmstead Barn B4 and B3 behind



Figure 12: Farmstead Barn B2 to left and B3 to right



Figure 13: View Barn B1 and Yard at Rear of Farmstead



Nearby Buildings

Figure 14: Adjacent Bungalow – alongside Public Footpath



Figure 15: Nearby Farm Building – alongside Public Footpath



2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 This LVA has been prepared based upon the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, third edition (GLVIA3), published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, in 2013. The assessment of Landscape Value also takes account of guidance in Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02-21 “Assessing landscape value outside national designations”.

2.2 In summary, the GLVIA3 states: “Landscape and Visual impact assessment (LVIA), is a tool used to identify and assess the significance of and the effects of change resulting from development on both landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people’s views and visual amenity.” (GLVIA3 paragraph 1.1.)

2.3 There are two components of LVIA:

- “Assessment of landscape effects; assessing effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right;
- Assessment of visual effects: assessing effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people.” (GLVIA3 paragraph 2.21.)

2.4 The GLVIA3 states:

“LVIA can be carried out either as part of a broader EIA, or as a standalone ‘appraisal’ of the likely landscape and visual effects of a proposed development...

- As a standalone ‘appraisal’ the process is informal and there is more flexibility, but the essence of the approach – specifying the nature of the proposed change or development; describing the existing landscape and the views and visual amenity of the area that may be affected; predicting the effects, although not their likely significance; and considering how those effects might be mitigated – still applies”. (GLVIA paragraph 3.2)

2.5 The components of this report include: baseline studies; description and details of the landscape proposals and mitigation measures to be adopted as part of the scheme; and identification and description of likely effects arising from the proposed development.

2.6 In terms of baseline studies, the assessment provides an understanding of the landscape that may be affected, its constituent elements, character, condition and value. For the visual baseline, this includes an understanding of the area in which the development may be visible, the people who may experience views, and the nature of views.

Assessment of Landscape Effects

2.7 GLVIA3 states that “An assessment of landscape effects deals with the effects of change and development on landscape as a resource” (GLVIA3 paragraph 5.1).

2.8 The baseline landscape is described by reference to existing published Landscape Character Assessments and by a description of the site and its context.

2.9 A range of landscape effects can arise through development. These can include:

- Change or loss of elements, features, aesthetic or perceptual aspects that contribute to the character and distinctiveness of the landscape;
- Addition of new elements that influence character and distinctiveness of the landscape;
- Combined effects of these changes.

2.10 The characteristics of the existing landscape resource are considered in respect of the susceptibility of the landscape resource to the change arising from this development. The value of the existing landscape is also considered.

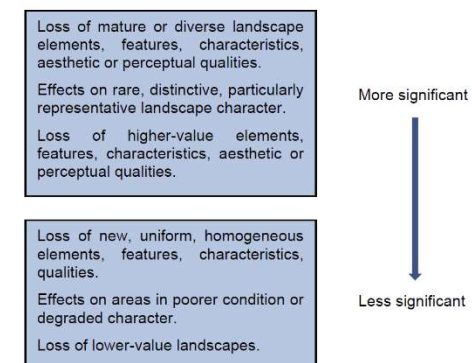
2.11 Each effect on landscape receptors is assessed in terms of size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and reversibility. In terms of size or scale of change, the judgement takes account of the extent of the existing landscape elements that will be lost or changed, and the degree to which the aesthetic or perceptual aspects or key characteristics of the landscape will be altered by removal or addition of new elements. Geographical extent is considered by reference to the extent of the area over which there will be a change. Duration is considered for the landscape effects, with short term effects

being defined as those lasting less than 5 years, medium term effects lasting between 5 and 10 years and long-term effects being defined as anything over 10 years in duration.

2.12 The level of effect is determined by considering the sensitivity of the landscape receptors and the magnitude of effect on the landscape. Final conclusions on the overall landscape effects are drawn from the assessment components described. This appraisal describes the nature of the landscape effects, and whether these are adverse or beneficial, at the following stages of development; construction, completion (year 1) and longer term (year 15).

2.13 GLVIA3 sets out some guidance on the underlying principles, which are used in this appraisal. This includes Figure 14, Scale of significance. Whilst this scheme is not EIA development, and judgements on significance are not therefore required, the Figure does provide useful guidance on reaching an overall judgement on the level of effects. This is repeated below (note this includes the correction of a typo, from the published document)

Figure 16: Scale of Significance



Assessment of Visual Effects

2.14 An assessment of visual effects deals with the effects of change and development on the views available to people and their visual amenity. This appraisal describes the nature of the visual effects and, whether these are adverse or beneficial, at the following stages of development; construction, completion (year 1 Winter) and longer term (year 15 Winter). The judgement is based upon the change from the current baseline visual experience, and the change can be assessed to be of adverse, neutral or beneficial significance to the receptor.

2.15 The first stage in the assessment is to identify approximate visibility/ visibility mapping. This is done by either a computerised Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)¹, or by manual methods using map study and field evaluation. In this case, it has been done by field evaluation. A series of viewpoints are included within the assessment that are representative of views towards the site from surrounding visual receptors (in this case VPs V1 to VP7). Other views of the site (VPs 8 to 15) are included where it supports the description and understanding of the site's landscape and visual characteristics.

2.16 The views also typically represent what can be seen from a variety of distances from the development and different viewing experiences.

2.17 It is important to remember that visual receptors are all people. For each affected viewpoint, the assessment considers both the susceptibility to change in views and the value attached to views.

“The visual receptors most susceptible to change are generally likely to include:

- Residents at home;
- People, whether residents or visitors, who are engaged in outdoor recreation, including use of public rights of way, whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape and on particular views;
- Visitors to heritage assets, or to other attractions, where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience;
- Communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents in the area;

Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes tend to fall into an intermediate category of moderate susceptibility to change. Where travel involves recognised scenic routes awareness of views is likely to be particularly high.” (GLVIA3 paragraph 6.33.)

“Visual receptors likely to be less sensitive to change include:

- People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views of the landscape;
- People at their place of work whose attention may be focused on their work or activity, not on their surroundings, and where the setting is not important to the quality of working life (although there may on occasion be cases where views are an important contributor to the setting and to the quality of working life).” (GLVIA3 paragraph 6.34.)

2.18 Each of the visual effects is evaluated in terms of its size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration or reversibility.

2.19 In terms of size or scale, the magnitude of visual effects takes account of:

- “The scale of the change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition, including proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development;
- The degree of contrast or integration of any new features or changes in the landscape with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics in terms of form, scale and mass, line height, colour and texture;
- The nature of the view of the proposed development, in terms of the relative amount of time over which it will be experienced and whether views will be full, partial or glimpses” (GLVIA3 paragraph 6.39).

2.20 The geographical extent of the visual effect in each viewpoint is likely to reflect:

- The angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor;
- The distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development;
- The extent of the area over which the changes would be visible.

2.21 As with landscape effects, the duration of the effect could be short to long term or permanent and the same definitions apply.

2.22 GLVIA3 states 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, but 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)

2.23 The final conclusions on effects, whether adverse, neutral, no change or beneficial, are drawn from the separate judgements on the sensitivity of the receptors and the magnitude of the effects. This overall judgement is formed from a reasoned professional overview of the individual judgements against the assessment criteria.

3.0 LANDSCAPE BASELINE

Figure 17: Map showing Localised Landscape Context of Site



Figure 18: Low Aerial Oblique View from above Public Footpath looking Northwards - showing the large rural open fields with hedgerows with occasional mature trees and occasional woodland copses

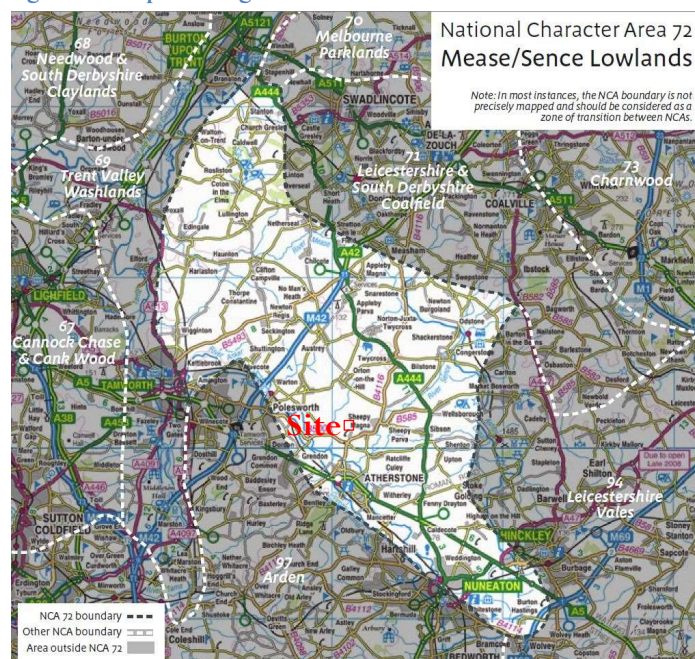


Landscape Character

National Character

3.1 National Character Area (NCA) profiles have been prepared by Natural England for the 159 NCAs defined across England. These NCA profiles include a description of the natural and cultural features that shape the landscape, how the landscape has changed over time, the current key drivers for ongoing change, and a broad analysis of each area's characteristics. Figure 17 below illustrates the NCA and character area within the context of the site.

Figure 19: Map showing NCA 72 and the Site



3.2 At this very broad landscape scale, the site lies within the western part of Natural England's National Character Area (NCA) 72 'Mease/Sence Lowlands'.

The Key Characteristics for the NCA are:

"The Mease/Sence Lowlands are a gently rolling agricultural landscape centred around the rivers Mease, Sence and Anker. The area extends across: Derbyshire in the north, Warwickshire in the south, Leicestershire in the east and Staffordshire in the west. With its towns lying on the fringes of the National Character Area (NCA), only a very small percentage of it is urban. These lowlands retain a rural, remote character, with small villages, red brick farmsteads and occasional historic parkland and country houses. The National Forest extends into the area north of the River Mease.

The NCA contains one Special Area of Conservation (SAC) – the River Mease, which is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) – and has 139 ha of nationally designated SSSI, including the Ashby Canal SSSI. Important habitats include neutral grasslands, wet meadows, parkland, wet woodlands, rivers and streams, all of which support characteristic and rare species of international importance, including the white-clawed crayfish, the spined loach and the bullhead fish.

The historic character of this area is important, in particular its ancient woodlands, veteran trees, landscaped parklands and areas of archaeological interest, including ridge and furrow.

With 30 per cent Grade 2 agricultural land, this is a rich and productive agricultural area. Most of the land is in agricultural use, primarily for wheat. There is much potential for an increase in appropriate woodland planting as part of the National Forest initiative, which is increasing recreation opportunities, woodland cover and biomass potential for the future.”

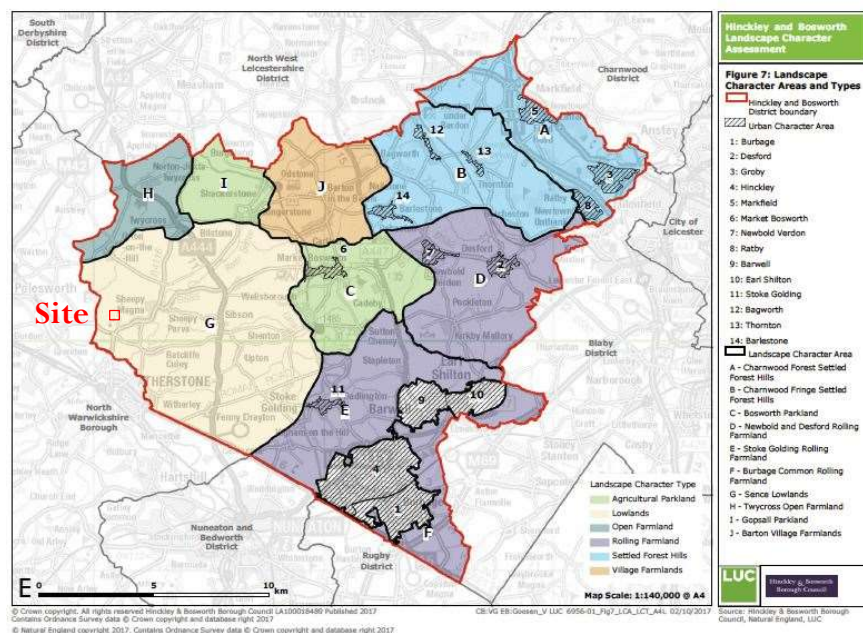
3.3 The Key characteristics are:

- *This is a gently rolling landscape with rounded clay ridges and shallow valleys, with a more undulating landform in the north-west. This is a well ordered agricultural landscape of open views, with a relatively tranquil character.*
- *Triassic Mercia Mudstones underlie this area and give rise to productive clay soils; outcrops of sandstone extend across the area southwards and westwards from the edge of the adjacent coalfield.*
- *Woodland cover is generally limited to scattered hedgerow trees, coverts and spinneys, and occasional groups of trees along rivers and streams. Larger-scale planting associated with The National Forest in the north of the NCA has significantly increased woodland cover and strengthened the wooded character of the landscape.*
- *The majority of the farmland has a strongly rectilinear pattern of low hedgerows and scattered hedgerow trees. On steeper ground and heavier clays, hedgerows are more substantial and hedgerow trees more frequent.*
- *Extensive, open areas of arable cultivation predominate. On steeper ground and heavier clays the land is less intensively farmed, and arable and pasture are mixed. Beef and dairy farming are also common.*
- *The main river courses of the Mease and Sence are generally very open; they are nationally important for nature conservation and support internationally rare species, including the white-clawed crayfish, spined loach and bullhead fish. Willow and alder riparian vegetation is a feature along minor streams.*
- *Important habitats include neutral grasslands, wet meadows, parkland, wet woodlands, rivers and streams, all of which support characteristic and rare species.*
- *The Ashby Canal and Coventry Canal are landscape features that are important for nature conservation and recreation. They act as reminders of our cultural heritage.*
- *Landscaped parklands and fine country house estates, spired churches and historic farmsteads, areas of remnant ridge and furrow and deserted settlements contribute to the time depth and sense of history of the area.*
- *with wide verges and straight enclosure roads. Red brick buildings and spired churches are often prominent landscape features. Isolated large 19th-century red brick farmsteads are also notable.*
- *Larger modern urban development is present on the fringes of the NCA in Nuneaton, Hinckley and Burton-upon-Trent. Straight motorways and main roads cut through the area north–south and east–west.*

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2017)

3.4 The Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment has been undertaken at a Borough level. It subdivides the landscape into ten different Landscape Character Areas with the site being located within LCA G: Sense Lowlands.

Figure 20: Extract from HBBC LCA (2017)



3.5 The LCA, which covers a large area, has the following Key Characteristics:

Box 1: LCA G - Key Characteristics

Key Characteristics

- 1) Flat to gently rolling lowland vale landscape with rounded clay ridges and shallow valleys giving rise to extensive and open views.
- 2) Presence of surface water in rivers and streams (including the River Sence) and frequent streams, field ponds and ditches as well as the visitor attractions of the Ashby Canal, Bosworth Water Park and Marina.
- 3) Well-ordered agricultural landscape with a regular pattern of rectilinear fields of typical Parliamentary enclosure lined by low hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees.
- 4) A network of rural roads and lanes are lined by ditches and wide grass verges, with the main A444 running north south through the area.
- 5) A rural and tranquil character.
- 6) Spired and towered churches form prominent landmarks in the open landscape.
- 7) A rural dispersed settlement pattern of linear villages, scattered farmsteads and barns.
- 8) Small villages with strong sense of place and local vernacular of red brick.
- 9) Bosworth Battlefield has strong heritage associations.

3.6 The LCA identifies the Key Sensitivities and Values as being:

Box 2: LCA G - Key Sensitivities and Values

Key Sensitivities and Values

- 1) Rural character with a lack of significant intrusions or light pollution resulting in a sense of 'remoteness' and tranquility.
- 2) Dispersed settlement pattern of small historic villages with a strong sense of local distinctiveness and attractive local vernacular of red brick and historic buildings.
- 3) Recreational value of the area for walking and cycling, as well as local visitor attractions of Bosworth Water Park and Ashby Canal.
- 4) The Ashby Canal is a valued landscape asset, particularly as a recreation and biodiversity resource as well as a reminder of the area's industrial heritage.
- 5) Biodiversity value of the grass verges and species-rich grassland which is important in this area which is increasingly dominated by agricultural intensification.
- 6) The relatively intact field boundary pattern, areas of remnant ridge and furrow and medieval field pattern and the hedgerows with hedgerow trees which add texture and interest to the landscape.
- 7) Church spires and towers which form distinctive landmarks in a rural setting, and are prominent in extensive views across the landscape.
- 8) Historic value associated with the combination of significant historic features, most notably the nationally important Bosworth Battlefield and Roman settlement of Manduessedum, as well as industrial heritage associated with the Canal, and numerous historic buildings.

3.7 The LCA identifies the recommended Landscape Strategies as being:

Box 3: LCA G - Landscape Strategies

Landscape Strategies

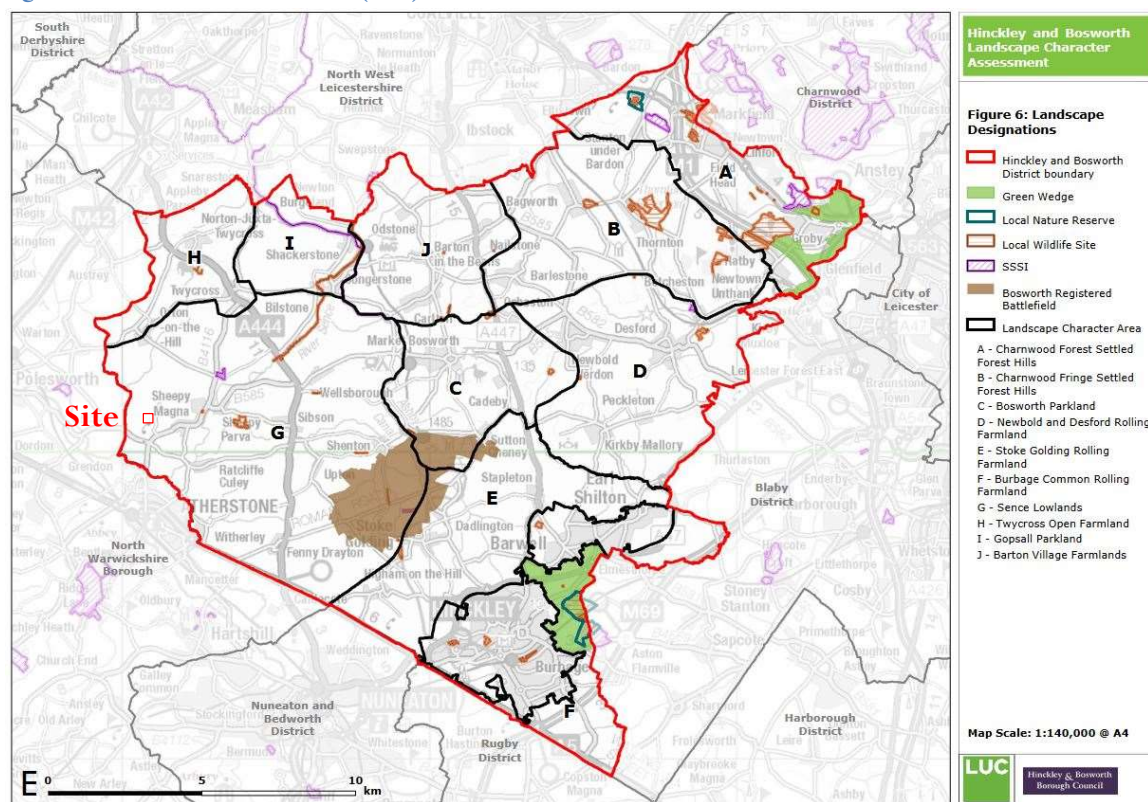
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|---|---|
| 1) Retain hedgerows and replace hedgerow trees to ensure continuation when they reach the end of their life. Encourage the use of traditional 'Midlands-style' hedgelaying. | 5) Conserve the areas of semi natural neutral grassland and seek opportunities to extend and link this habitat. Retain the wide grass verges for biodiversity and enhance species diversity within them where possible. |
| 2) Conserve the open rural views including views to church spires and towers in their rural setting. | 6) Respect and enhance the strong character of the villages, ensuring new development complements existing context with regards to scale, form, materials and boundary features. |
| 3) Retain areas of tranquillity and rural character, ensuring that development in such areas respects the rural context. | 7) 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. |
| 4) Promote recreational and cultural opportunities associated with the battlefield. | |

Designations

3.8 Local designations associated with the site are shown in Extract from HBBC LCA – shown in Figure 19 below. The site and the surrounding context are not covered by any landscape quality designation.

3.9 The LCA shows that there are no designated landscapes or features within the proximity of the site.

Figure 21: Extract from HBBC LCA (2017)



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 Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2017
 © Natural England 2017. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2017
 CB\VG EB\Goosen_V LUC 6956-01_Fig6_LandscDesignations_A4L 03/08/2017
 Source: Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council, Natural England

Figure 22: Defra MAGIC MAP Data Search

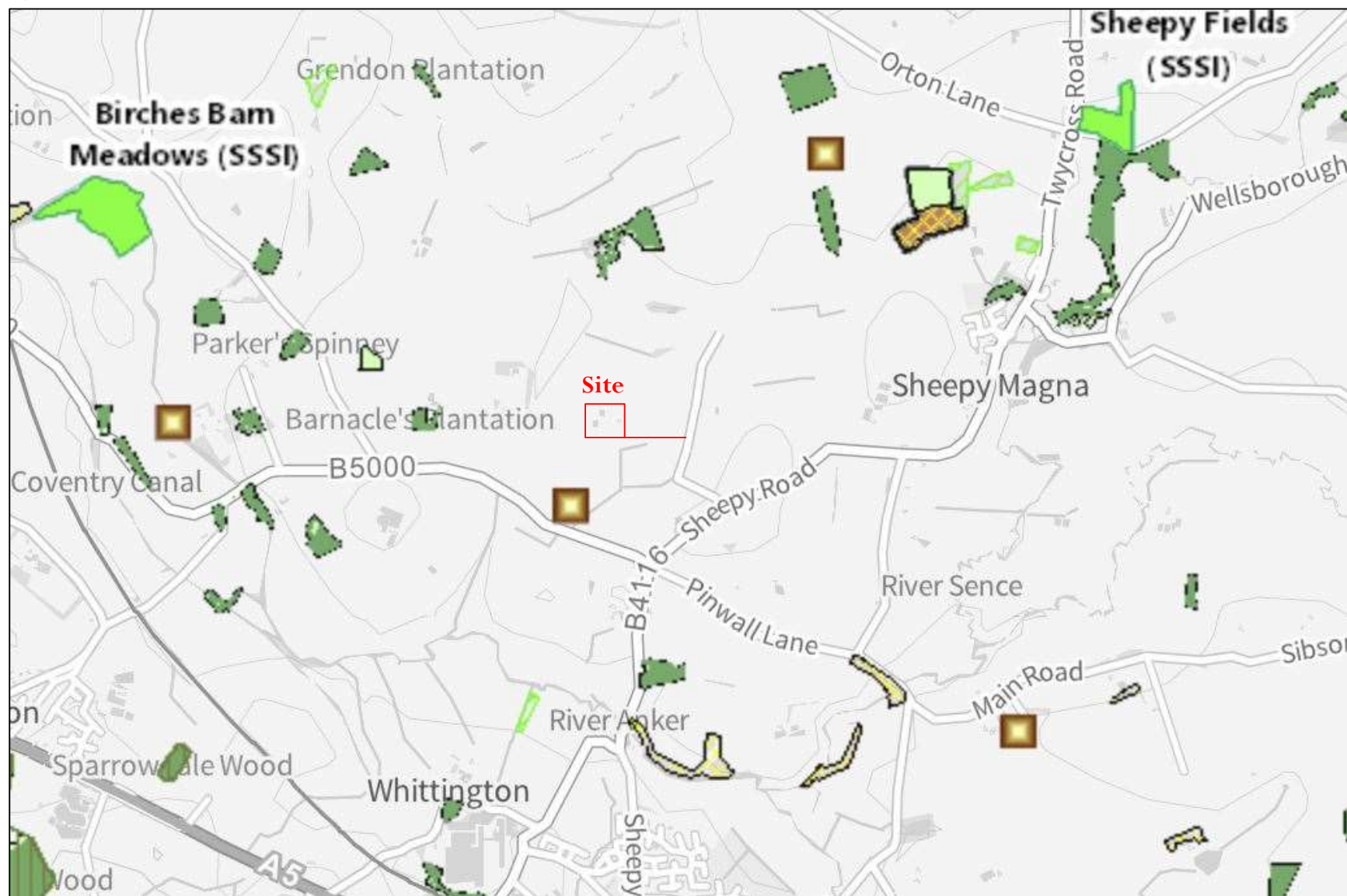
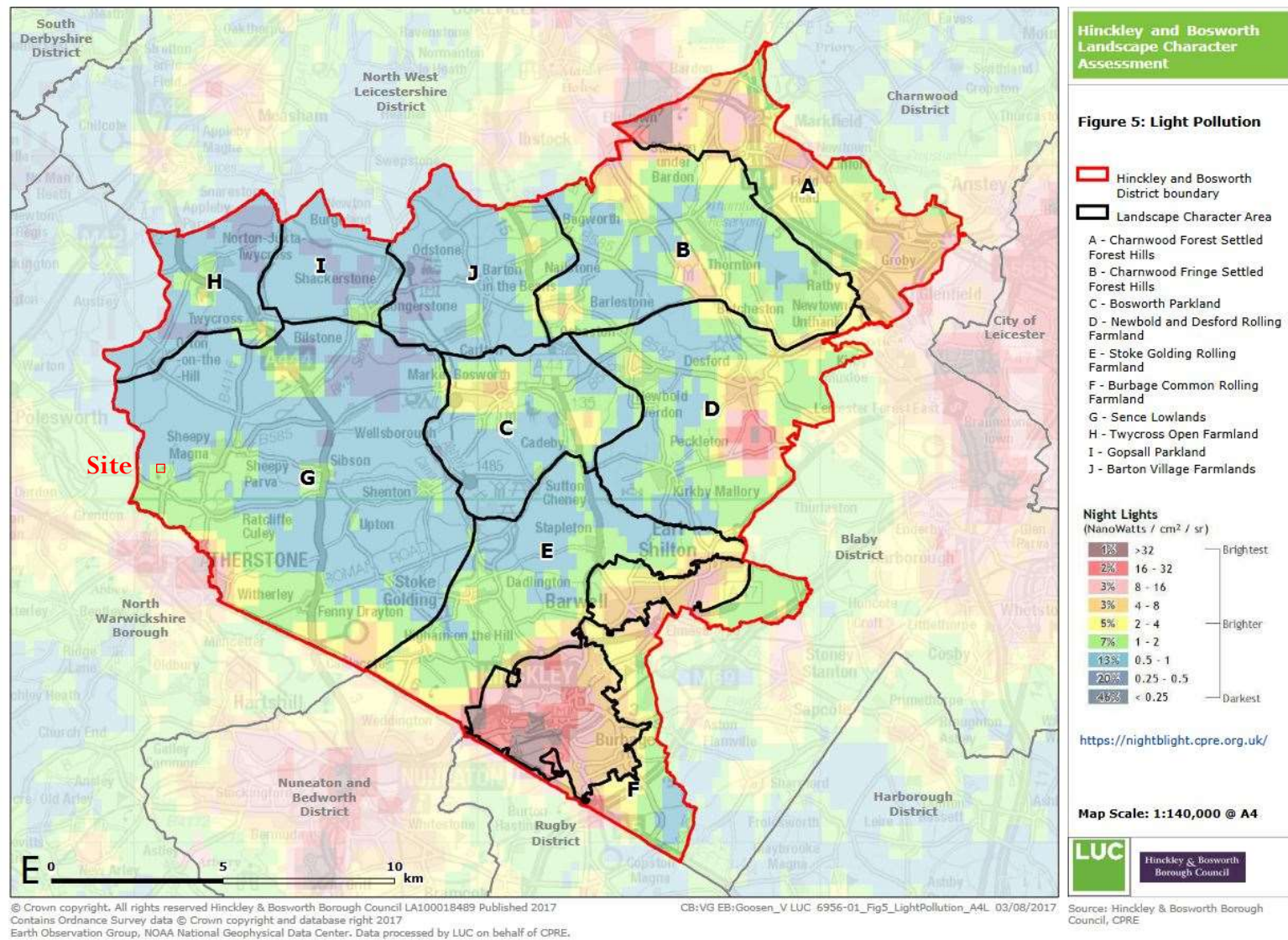


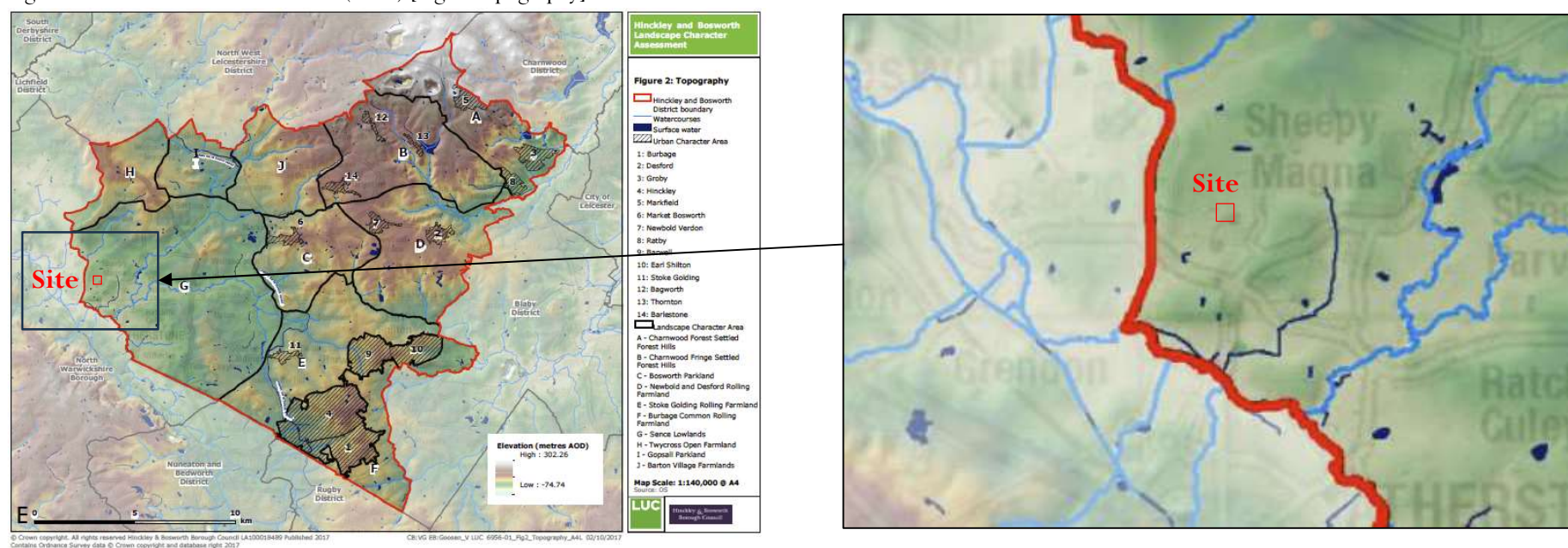
Figure 23: Extract from Light Pollution Map HBBC LCA (2017)



Topography

3.10 The following should be read in conjunction with Figures 22 and 23. The site itself is relatively flat at approximately 76m AOD, however it does fall gently from the site into the next field to approximately 70m AOD and then slopes upwards towards the B5000.

Figure 24: Extract from HBBC LCA (2017) [Fig.2 Topography]



Site Topographical Survey

Figure 25: Extract from Topographical Survey



Finer Landscape Character Assessment

3.11 An assessment of landscape character of the site and its immediate context has been carried out, providing a finer level of assessment than the published studies.

3.12 The isolated site is located to the north of the B5000 and to the west of Sheepy Road, near Sheepy Magna. The main farmstead site lies at the end of a farm track, accessed off Sheepy Road, via Crow Lane. The farmstead consists of a derelict C19 farmhouse with remnant single storey derelict former cart and cowsheds, and five dilapidated C20 barns/sheds – with a large yard to the rear. The farmhouse has large mature trees and shrubs to the east between the house and the neighbouring property, known as ‘The Bungalow’. The farmstead is surrounded by relatively large field with mature hedgerows and occasional mature trees; and occasional copses. A number of watercourses and ditches follow field boundaries and a small pond is located off site. The landscape context of the site is relatively open away from the built form of central farmstead with the land sloping slightly down towards the south and the B5000. A public footpath lies alongside the eastern boundary of the site – running north-south to the B5000. Whilst farmsteads are a typical feature of this Landscape Character Area, this particular farmstead is derelict and only used for occasional storage of vehicles and materials, and judged to be visually unsightly.

Landscape Value

3.13 In terms of ‘landscape value’, it is appropriate to examine the role of the site and its immediate context in terms of the range of local factors set out in LI TGN 02-21 and summarised in the methodology. This considers the landscape in terms of a range of factors as set out below. As a starting point, landscape designations have been considered.

3.14 **Landscape Designations:** The site and its wider landscape context (including its Visual Envelope (ZVI) (Figure 45) are not subject to any national, local or other landscape designations

3.15 **Natural Heritage:** Features of natural heritage within the site are limited to ecological habitat in the form of the boundary hedgerows and a low number of hedgerow trees. An ecological Phase 1 survey has identified a small area of scrub within the western corner of the site. An arboricultural survey (see Figure 27) of the site has identified the majority of trees to be mature in a fair condition within the farmstead site, with only the mature Oak in the field to west be identified as being in decline.

3.16 **Cultural Heritage:** There are no heritage assets directly associated with the site or in direct close proximity. There is a Scheduled Ancient Monument within the boundaries of the wider farmland, to the south alongside the B5000. This Scheduled Monument does not rely on the existing site to directly contribute to the heritage

significance of this Scheduled Ancient Monument. There are no other listed buildings or heritage assets in the immediate vicinity of the site.

3.17 Landscape Condition: The site lies within the open countryside but the site itself consists of the dilapidated remains of a C19 farmstead with mostly C20 barns, sheds and yards covering the site.

3.18 Associations: The site is not known to have any particular associations with any particular people e.g. artists or writers, or historic events that contribute to perceptions of the natural beauty of the area.

3.19 Distinctiveness: The site and context are located within the Senses Lowlands LCA within the Hinckley and Bosworth Landscape Character Assessment and reflect some of the large open fields with mature hedgerows, isolated farmstead, etc.

3.20 Recreational Value: The site is in private ownership and does not have any direct public access and therefore has limited recreation value. There is one public footpath which runs along the eastern boundary of the site from the B5000 in the south – northwards towards Benn Hills Farm.

3.21 Perceptual (Scenic): As a result of the predominantly flat slightly rolling landscape and presence of field boundary vegetation and

small woodlands, views are limited and there are no features of particular visual interest within the local context. It is considered that the site and the local landscape has no pronounced sense of scenic value.

3.22 Perceptual (Wildness and tranquillity): The site is currently a disused farmstead located in open countryside, surrounded by relatively large fields. The site is relatively tranquil due to the distance from public roads, etc.

3.23 Functional aspects: The site is a former farmstead located on the high ground. It does not form a particular function such as acting as a floodplain, forming part of a specific Green Infrastructure network or forming part of the setting to a designated landscape.

3.24 In conclusion and having appraised the above factors it is judged that the site and the immediate landscape is of **Low landscape value**. Whilst the farmstead is a typical feature of this character area - due to its dilapidated nature, with surrounding modern C20 farm buildings, this provides a detracting factor in terms of the character and appearance of this character area.

Landscape Sensitivity

3.25 The UK national guidance on landscape sensitivity ‘An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and management’ (2019, Natural England) provide guidance and a definition as to what Landscape Sensitivity is:

Box 4: National Definition of Landscape Sensitivity

“Landscape Sensitivity Within the context of spatial planning and land management, landscape sensitivity is a term applied to landscape character and the associated visual resource, combining judgements of their susceptibility to the specific development type/ development scenario or other change being considered together with the value(s) related to that landscape and visual resource.

Landscape sensitivity may be regarded as a measure of the resilience, or robustness, of a landscape to withstand specified change arising from development types or land management practices, without undue negative effects on the landscape and visual baseline and their value”. (p.7, 2019)

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (2017)

3.26 The site lies within the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Area 2: Sheepy Magna and Surrounds (north of B5000).

Figure 26: HBBC Landscape Sensitivity Assessment map for Sensitivity Area 2

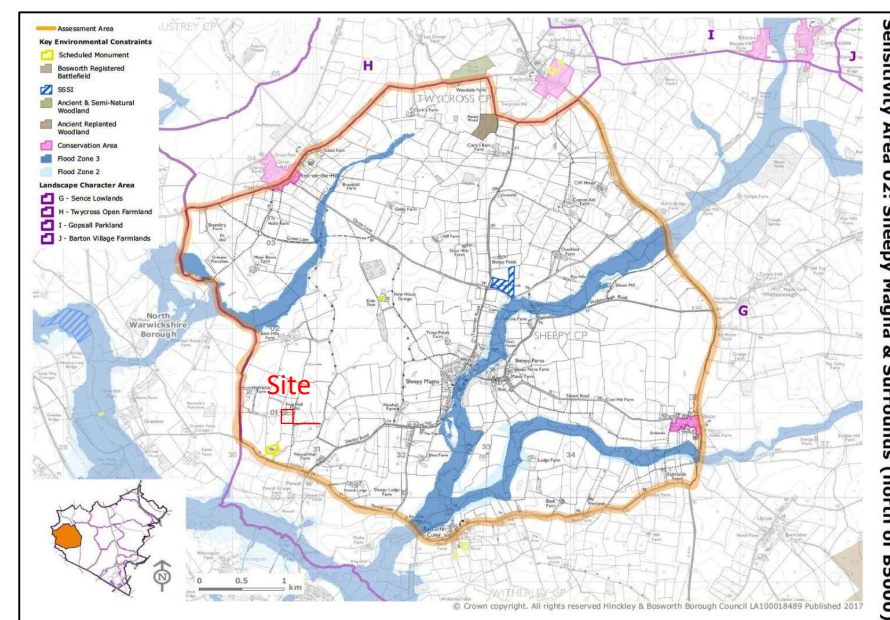


Figure 27: Extract from HBBC Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

2. SHEEPY MAGNA & SURROUNDINGS (NORTH OF B5000)

Summary
The sensitivity assessment area is located in Landscape Character Area G: Sence Lowlands. It covers roughly one quarter of the character area (2393.2 hectares) to the west of the A444 and north of the B5000, comprising the rural lowland vale surrounding the River Sence, characterised by a relatively high density of dispersed small villages connected by a network of rural roads and lanes.

Representative photographs**Description by evaluation criteria**

Criteria	Description and indication of sensitivity	Rating
Physical character	A flat to gently rolling lowland vale landscape with rounded clay ridges and shallow valleys draining to the River Sence (and Anker in adjacent District). Predominantly arable, with some grazed pasture fields along the floodplain. The pattern is mainly one of planned Midland enclosures, plus very large post war fields, with sparse woodland cover. The prevalence of small streams and ponds is a feature.	L-M
Settlement form & edge	There are a number of scattered hamlets and linear villages dispersed across the landscape including the larger villages of Sheepy Magna and Sheepy Parva, the small agricultural village of Sibson, and Ratcliffe Culey located on slight elevations within the vale. Settlements, although expanded with areas of modern residential development on the edges, generally retain an intact historic character and distinct vernacular, and are integrated into the rural landscape, although with some visibility in views.	M
Settlement setting	The settlements tend to be located on slight elevations of land and have some prominence as landmarks within the wider rural area including the church tower at Sibson and spire at Sheepy. Sheepy Magna and Sheepy Parva have a close relationship with their River Sence setting, being located just above the floodplain. The surroundings provide a rural setting for these former agricultural villages. To the south of Sheepy Magna there is a large area of planned enclosure containing ridge and furrow which extends eastwards to the edge of Sibson.	M-H

2. SHEEPY MAGNA & SURROUNDINGS (NORTH OF B5000)

Visual character	The area is viewed from, and has long views to, surrounding higher ground for example the Twycross/Orton ridge. Generally there are wide, long views across the agricultural landscape punctuated by hedgelines and mature hedgerow trees plus church towers and spires which signal the presence of villages.	H
Perceptual qualities	The area is a rural, agricultural landscape, albeit with areas of expanded/modern settlement within the villages and traffic on the rural roads and lanes. Areas of little light pollution and tranquillity persist away from the villages and roads.	M-H
Historic character	A historic character prevails within the dispersed villages plus field patterns including areas of ridge and furrow close to settlements.	M

Evaluation of criteria and landscape sensitivity judgement

The assessment area is considered to have overall **medium-high** sensitivity to development. There may be some capacity (**medium** sensitivity) for further small scale extension to existing villages, providing these are sensitively designed and avoid features of environmental interest. Sensitivity to small scale commercial development is considered to be **medium-high**; there may be some limited capacity if well-sited due to the large scale of the landscape and existing larger development types in the form of modern farm units, however sensitivity to larger scale B8 development is considered **high** due to the rural character of the area.

Development scenario	Sensitivity				
Residential housing 2-3 stories	L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Commercial development Small scale (B1/ B2)	L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Commercial development Large scale (B8)	L	L-M	M	M-H	H

Key sensitivities and values

- Historic field pattern, including smaller fields around settlement, piecemeal reorganised enclosures and in particular areas of ridge and furrow which persists around settlements.
- The strong rural character and lack of intrusion with areas of relative tranquillity.
- Dispersed pattern of settlement and distinct historic character and vernacular of the villages.
- The extensive views and open character, with church towers and spires forming landmarks in a rural setting.
- Remnant areas of species-rich grassland including grass verges.

Guidance

- Any new development should:
- Be well related to the existing villages in terms of size, scale, form and vernacular.

2. SHEEPY MAGNA & SURROUNDINGS (NORTH OF B5000)

- Seek to conserve areas of historic and biodiversity interest including the areas of ridge and furrow and floodplain grazing which persist around villages.
- Avoid development on the floodplain of the Sence and tributaries.
- Include appropriate measures, including tree planting and conservation of field boundaries to help integrate development into the rural landscape.

3.27 Whilst the HBBC Landscape Sensitivity Assessment suggests that the landscape has medium sensitivity to 'Residential House 2-3 stories', in this particular case the new family home will replace the volume and massing of the existing dilapidated farmhouse and associated mainly C20 farm buildings spread across the site.

3.28 The proposed new farmhouse will not adversely affect the identified key sensitivities and values: historic field pattern, strong rural character (large country house are part of the character of this area); dispersed pattern of settlement; extensive open views; and remnant area of species rich grassland. The development will include appropriate measures – tree planting and conservation of field boundaries to help integrate the new farmhouse into the landscape.

Ecological and Habitat Survey

Figure 28: Extract Map from Habitat Survey



4.0 VISUAL BASELINE

4.1 A visual appraisal has been undertaken for the site. This has explored the nature of the existing visual amenity of the area and sought to establish the approximate visibility of the site from surrounding locations and receptors. A series of photo viewpoints have been selected which support this analysis. The majority of these viewpoints focus on the adjacent public footpath as requested by the Council in their pre-application comments. Other key potential viewpoints have been assessed.

4.2 A Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) has been determined by local ground-based site survey. This ZVI is shown in Figure 30.

4.3 Photographs have been taken to illustrate a view from a specific vantage point, or to demonstrate a representative view for those receptors that are moving through the landscape, e.g. rights of way users. The photographs demonstrate varying degrees of visibility and include both short and long-range views. The photographs were taken on the 25th September 2023 and 9th December 2023 and provide 'worst case' winter views where there is typically greater visibility across the landscape. Seasonal differences have been taken into account when determining the visual effects on these receptors.

Photo Viewpoints

4.4 A series of viewpoints are included within the assessment that are representative of views towards the site from surrounding visual receptors (in this case VPs V1 to VP7). Other views of the site (VPs 8 to 15) are included where it supports the description and understanding of the site's landscape and visual characteristics.

4.5 An assessment of the likely visual effects of the proposed development upon surrounding receptors is detailed in the subsequent section. Figure 30 details the location of the photo viewpoints. Verified Photographs are also provided for viewpoints 1 to 7 along the public footpath, which are 'Type 2 (wireframe) and Type 3 (rendered) Annotated Viewpoint Photographs. From the other viewpoint locations either not visible or the farmstead is just visible in the far distance

Viewpoints

Figure 30: Map showing the Zone of Visual Influence and Receptor Viewpoints

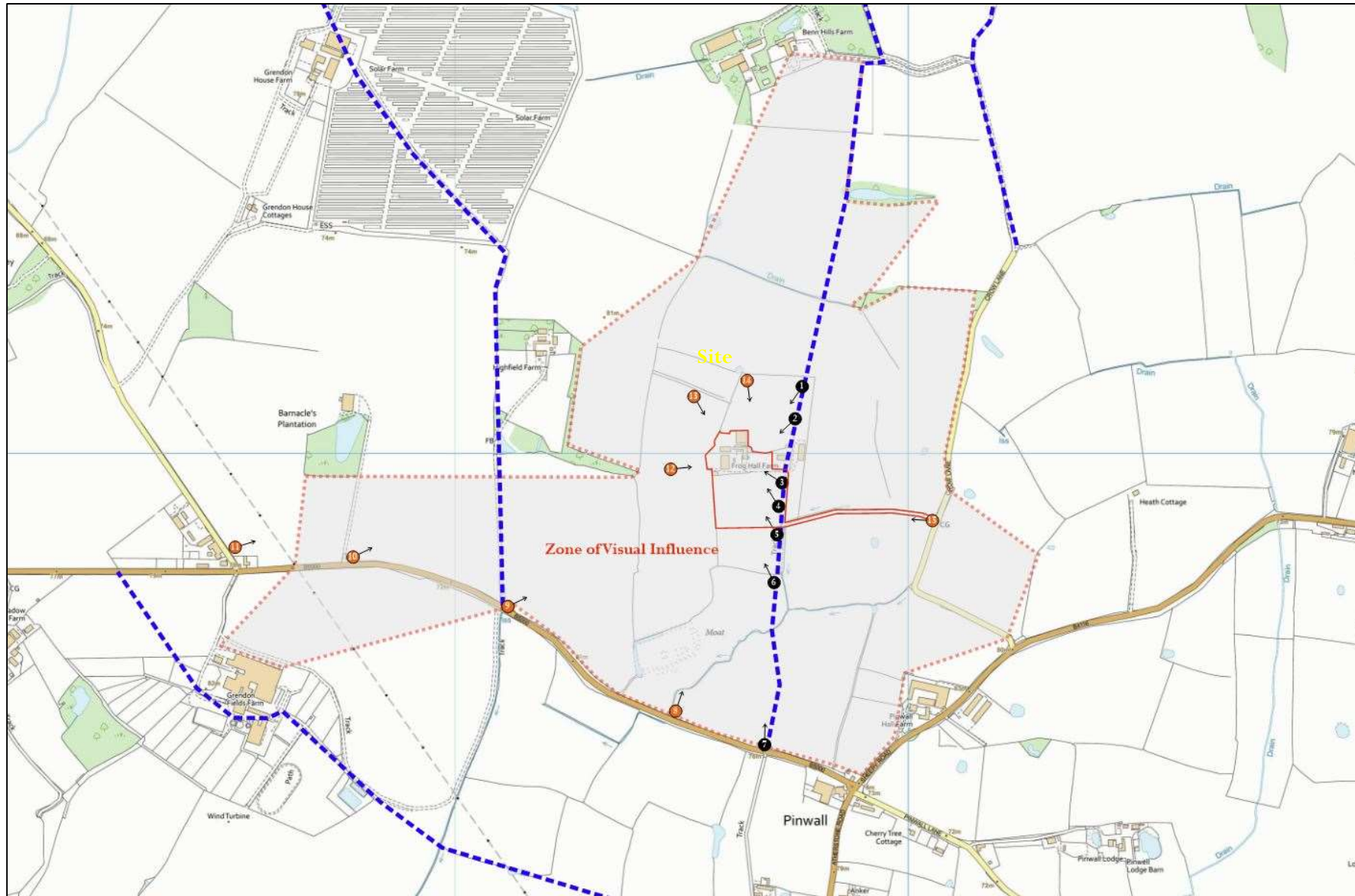


Figure 31: View 1: From Public Footpath looking SW towards Rear of Existing Farmstead

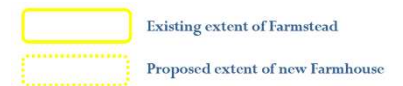


Figure 32: View 2: From Public Footpath looking SW nearer towards Rear of Existing Farmstead

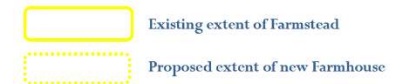
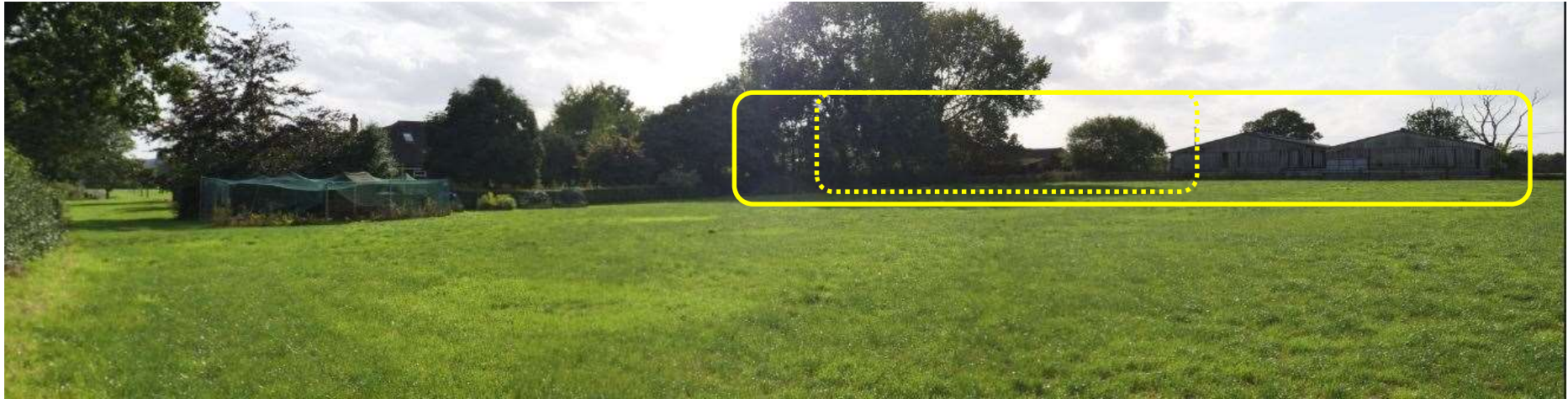


Figure 33: View 3: From Public Footpath looking NW towards Front of Existing Farmstead

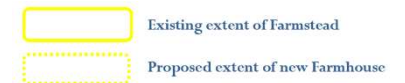


Figure 34: View 4: From Public Footpath along farm track looking NW towards Front of Existing Farmstead

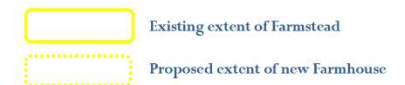


Figure 35: View 5: From Public Footpath looking NW towards Front of Existing Farmstead

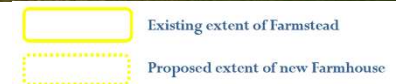


Figure 36: View 6: From Public Footpath Gateway looking NW towards Front of Existing Farmstead

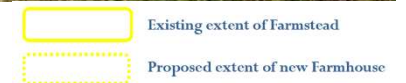


Figure 37: View 7: From B5000 Roadside Style on Public Footpath looking NW towards Front of Existing Farmstead – Glimpse views of Barns and Roofs

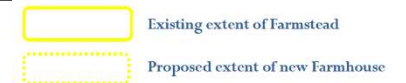


Figure 38: View 8: From B5000 Roadside Glimpse views of Barns and Roofs through Hedge during Winter



Figure 39: View 9: From Public Footpath on B5000 looking towards Farmstead – no view due lower level and rising slope

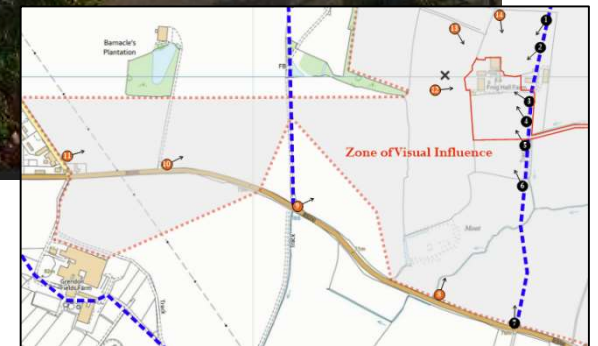


Figure 40: View 10: View From Vehicular Entrance to Barnacle's Plantation with distant view of Farmstead near horizon

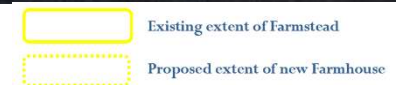


Figure 41: View 11: From opposite Smithy's Garm Shop looking towards Farmstead with very distant view Farmstead on horizon

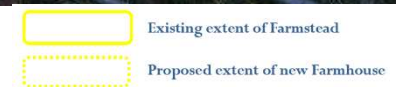


Figure 42: View 12: Panoramic View from Field to West of Farmstead looking towards Farmstead [No Public Access]

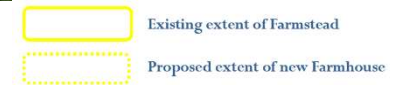


Figure 43: View 13: Panoramic View from Edge of Field to NW of Farmstead looking towards Farmstead [No Public Access]

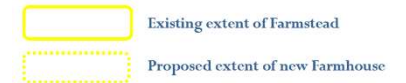


Figure 44: View 14: From Field to North of Farmstead looking Southwards towards Rear



Figure 45: View 15: From Crow Hill Lane Entrance to Farmstead – distant views of buildings



-  Existing extent of Farmstead
-  Proposed extent of new Farmhouse

Summary of Visual Baseline

4.6 The baseline analysis results in a number of reasoned conclusions which are summarised below:

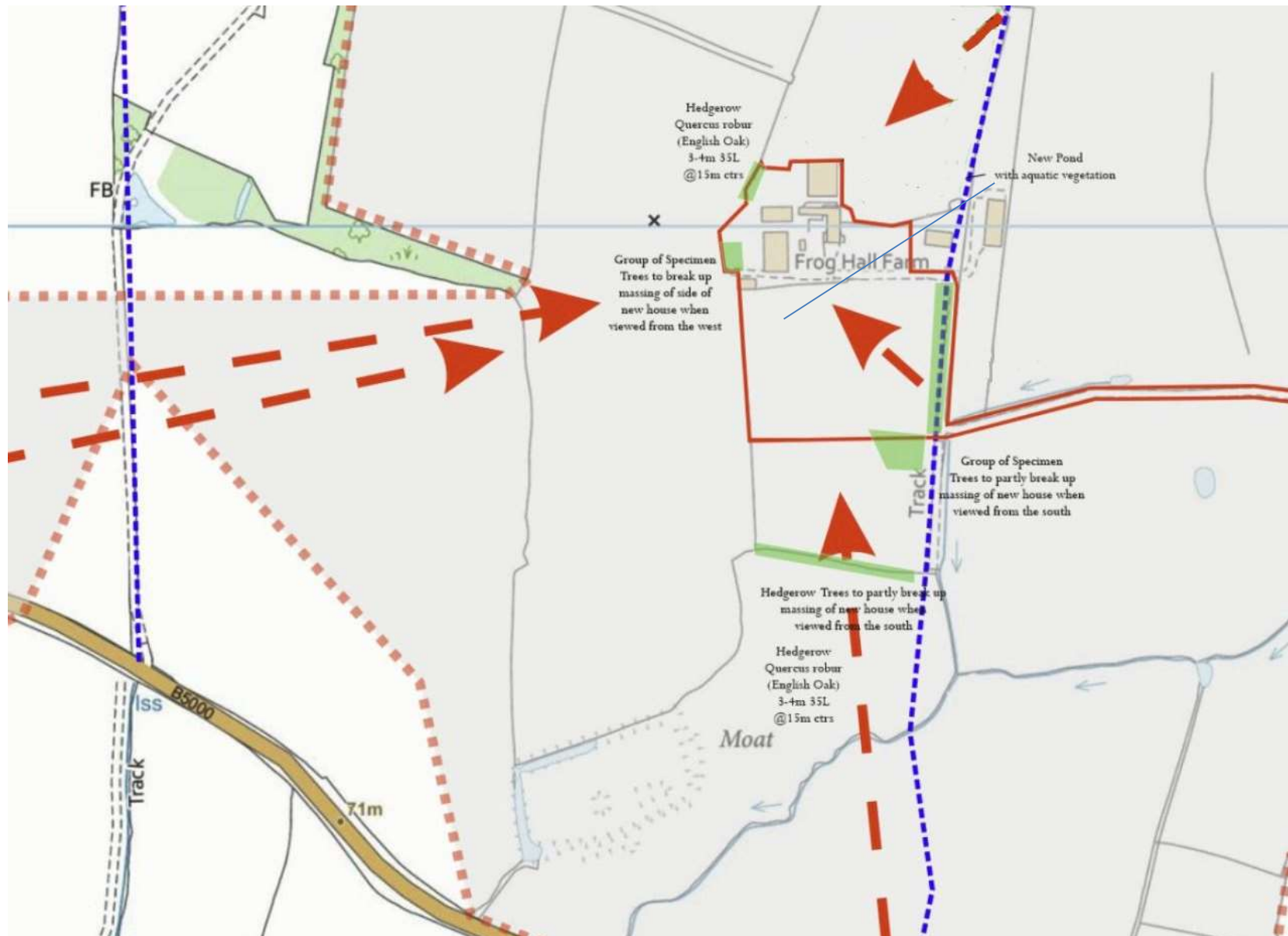
- The site is located within the open countryside but the built form is concentrated in a small area around the C19 farmhouse. With C20 barns to the west – partly screened from some directions by mature trees;
- The landform of the site and surrounding context is relatively flat and views are limited by existing established vegetation
- Visual receptors are mostly limited to those along the public footpath running north south on the eastern boundary of the site. Distant and very distant views of part of the farmstead C20 barns can be glimpsed occasionally from the B5000.

5.0 LANDSCAPE MITIGATION

5.1 The visual impact baseline studies identified opportunities for landscape mitigation. The chosen landscape mitigation seeks not to completely screen the new proposals but to break up the massing and of the new building with new planted semi-mature trees along the western side of the farmhouse and the driveway, and enhanced tree planting within the hedgerows to the south of the farmhouse.

5.2 These new parkland trees and hedge planting will also improve the habitat and biodiversity of the site. The new pool to the south of the farmhouse will also enhance the habitat and biodiversity of the site.

Figure 46: Map showing Key Visual Impact Sightlines and Proposed Landscape Mitigation to reduce Impact of New Proposals



6.0 LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Generally

6.1 The degree by which a landscape is assessed to be sensitive is reflected in its ability to accommodate changes in character and value which would be caused by the development.

Landscape Quality

6.2 Assessing receptor sensitivity can be a complex task as it requires a judgement to be made on the relative value (or importance to society) of the various aspects of the landscape. These aspects include:

- The inherent value of the landscape itself.
- Its amenity value (e.g., its importance for users of public rights of way).
- Its ecological value
- Its tranquillity.

6.3 Its value as a setting for components of the historic environment such as listed buildings, SAMs, Parks and Gardens and Battlefields

6.4 Predicted landscape effects are assessed in terms of their scale, duration, magnitude, level and nature on identified sensitive receptors. Methods used for evaluation follow published guidance and include a combination of objective and subjective judgements. To aid consistency

and allow easier review of the results, checklists, tables and matrices have been used. The nature of an effect, whether adverse or beneficial is subjective based on professional judgement.

Key for Magnitude, Sensitivity & Significance:

O = None; N = Negligible; VL = Very Low; L = Low; ML = Medium-Low; M = Medium; MH = Medium-High; H = High; VH = Very High

Landscape Assessment Significance Matrix

		Significance								
Magnitude	VH	O	N	M	MH	MH	H	H	VH	VH
	H	O	N	M	M	MH	MH	H	H	VH
	MH	O	N	ML	M	M	MH	MH	H	H
	M	O	N	ML	ML	M	M	MH	MH	H
	ML	O	N	L	ML	ML	M	M	MH	MH
	L	O	N	L	L	ML	ML	M	M	MH
	VL	O	N	VL	L	L	ML	ML	M	M
	N	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
		O	N	VL	L	ML	M	MH	H	VH
		Sensitivity								

Table 1: Assessment of Landscape Impact of Development

Landscape Assessment	Current	Proposed Development Changes	Impact	Time-scale	Reversible	Magnitude	Sensitivity	Significance
Inherent value of landscape itself								
General Character	Large open fields with mature hedgerows and occasional trees, with occasional small copses. B5000 beyond site boundary to south and Sheepy Road to the east.	Replacement of dilapidated farmhouse and associated mainly C20 agricultural buildings, yard, heaps and associated farming paraphernalia - with a large single family home and garden (large family houses in isolated rural locations are characteristic of this Landscape Character Area)	Some beneficial change	Long-term	No	L	L	L
- Landform	Relatively flat across the site – sloping away slightly to the south	No significant change	NA	NA	NA	O	O	O
- Land-use	Rural - pastoral with medium height hedgerows. Site has been a farmstead in the past and current use is a derelict farmhouse associated C19 agricultural buildings, and C20 barns used for occasional agricultural storage of vehicles and materials,	Arable fields and grass areas retained but derelict farmstead replaced with new family home, gardens and associated parking with some landscaped areas and new trees. Large country houses are a feature of this landscape character area.	Some beneficial change	Long-term	No	L	L	L
- Landcover	Rural largescale fields and Farmstead	Pastoral fields retained but derelict farmstead replaced with new family home, gardens and associated parking with some landscaped areas and new trees	Neutral	Long-term	No	L	L	L
- Spatial enclosure	Large fields with clear sense of enclosure around the boundaries. Farmstead built form is forms a relatively enclosed building form.	Sense of openness within these fields will remain. New farmhouse and garden layout, slightly new access track; and, tree planting will slightly change character of immediate area of the farmstead but will adversely affect the surrounding open countryside character.	Neutral	Long-term	No	L	L	L
- Views	Visually open views to and from fields and farmstead to wider countryside. Current farmhouse ridge level is 85m AOD.	Views within area remain similar – dilapidated farmhouse and C20 barns will be replaced by a new single family home. The split volume and massing of the	Some beneficial change	Long-term	No	L	L	L

		existing house and agricultural buildings will be replaced with one continuous mass along the frontage of the farmstead site. The replacement of dispersed dilapidated farmhouse and C20 barns with a new high quality designed family home (which are common in this landscape area) can be assessed to be an improvement.						
Amenity Value								
- Public access to Footpaths	Public pedestrian right of way along part of eastern boundary of the site	No change to physical access of footpath	No change	NA	NA	O	O	O
- Public experience of Footpaths	Views and experiences – countryside views and experience of seeing a derelict farmstead with dilapidated buildings and untidy former farm building and yards.	Significant improvement in the quality of experience and views along this length of footpath. No loss of wider countryside views.	Some beneficial change	Long-term	No	L	L	L
Ecological Value	Relatively wide biodiversity associated with large open fields, mature hedgerows and occasional copses with off-site pond	On balance the diversity will be similar – but more widespread with some additional areas of habitats – trees, garden and pool.	Some beneficial change	Long-term	No	L	L	L
Heritage and Cultural Value	No listed heritage elements but historic field pattern and C19 farmstead.	No change to field pattern but loss of C19 derelict farmhouse and some remnant associated derelict farm buildings.	Some adverse change	Long-term	No	L	L	L
Tranquillity	Relatively tranquil –despite background noise in field of occasional vehicles on distant public roads.	No perceived change in tranquillity	No change	NA	NA	O	O	O

Key: Magnitude, Sensitivity & Significance O = None; N = Negligible; VL = Very Low; L = Low; ML = Medium-Low; M = Medium; MH = Medium-High; H = High; VH = Very High

7.0 VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 An inspection of the site and surrounding area showed that the key issue in planning terms was the potential impact upon users of the public footpaths overlooking the site. Therefore, a Visual Impact Assessment focusing on the visual impact of the proposed development on footpath users has been undertaken and users of the B5000.

7.2 The sensitivity of individual receptors will be dependent upon two key factors: a) distance and b) whether the view is direct or indirect from their normal views out across the landscape in front of them.

7.3 A direct close view will normally have a higher sensitivity for a receptor than an indirect distant view.

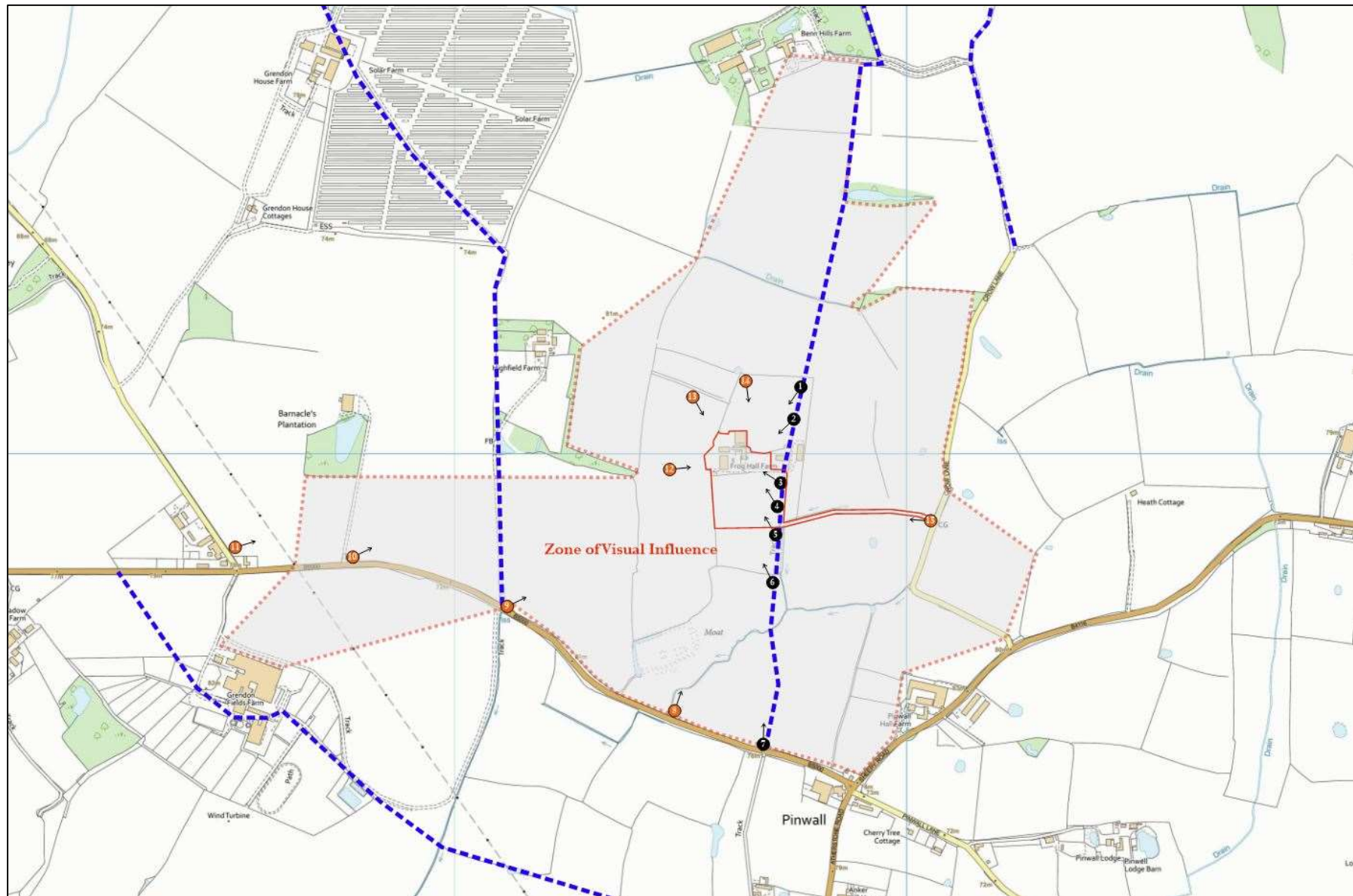
7.4 Sensitivity for users of public rights of way is considered to be:

- Direct close views – High
- Direct distant view - Medium
- Indirect close view – Medium
- Indirect distant view - Low

Visual Assessment Significance Matrix

		Significance								
Magnitude	VH	O	N	M	MH	MH	H	H	VH	VH
	H	O	N	M	M	MH	MH	H	H	VH
	MH	O	N	ML	M	M	MH	MH	H	H
	M	O	N	ML	ML	M	M	MH	MH	H
	ML	O	N	L	ML	ML	M	M	MH	MH
	L	O	N	L	L	ML	ML	M	M	MH
	VL	O	N	VL	L	L	ML	ML	M	M
	N	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
		O	N	VL	L	ML	M	MH	H	VH
		Sensitivity								

Figure 47: Map showing ZVI and Visual Receptor locations



7.5 The first seven Receptor Viewpoints (VP1-7), which lie along the adjacent public footpath, are provided in the following section with verified views of the proposed new farmhouse and associated new landscape planting. Another Verified viewpoint (VP15) on the public road known as Crow Lane has been provided to show the reader what the change in view is likely to be.

7.6 The hedgerow along the B5000 screens the site from the majority of road users. Viewpoints VP8 to 11 have been provided to show the glimpse viewpoints for B5000 road users and road walkers and the fact that the site cannot be seen from junction of the B5000 and the public footpath. These viewpoints have not been provided with verified views as the site (if visible) is only just discernible and will not be readily noticeable because of the sightline distances involved.

7.7 A further three views (VP12-14) have been provided showing the views from private locations, to allow the reader to have a fuller understanding of the changes proposed.

Figure 48: Satellite View showing location of 8 Verified Views along the public footpath and Crow Lane



Verified Viewpoints 1 to 7 and 15

Figure 49: VP01



Figure 50: VP02



Figure 51: VP03



Figure 52: VP04



Figure 53: VP05



Figure 54: VP06



Figure 55: VP07



Figure 56: VP15



Visual Impact Assessment

7.8 The general change of viewing experience from derelict farmstead to high quality designed single home is assessed to be Low and Beneficial. Those viewing experiences where the farmstead is so distant that it is hardly perceptible on the horizon are assessed as being of negligible impact. Sensitivity for Public Footpath walkers will be High (H), General Road Users will be Medium (M) and Private Views from Agricultural fields will be Low (L)

Table 2: Predicted Visual Impacts with Mitigation

	Location	Receptor	Current	Change	Magnitude	Sensitivity	Significance
V1	Public Footpath near field style to northeast of Site	Walkers on public footway	Relatively distant view of side of barn B1 and rear of Farmhouse. Some screened by existing mature trees and vegetation.	Construction: Distant views of demolition of farmhouse and barns; and then, construction of new house. Partly screened by existing mature trees and vegetation. 1 Year: Distant view of rear of new house and rear gardens. Partly screened by existing mature trees and vegetation. Overall - viewing experience slightly improved by new high quality single family home. 15 Years: Distant view of rear of new house. Mostly screened by existing mature trees and vegetation. Overall - viewing experience slightly improved by new high quality single family home.	L Beneficial	H	M Beneficial
V2	Public Footpath in field to north of Site	Walkers on public footway	View of side of barn B1 and rear of Farmhouse. Some screened by existing mature trees and vegetation.	Construction: Views of demolition of farmhouse and barns; and then, construction of new house. Partly screened by existing mature trees and vegetation. 1 Year: View of rear of new house and rear gardens. Partly screened by existing mature trees and vegetation. Overall - viewing experience slightly improved by new high quality single family home. 15 Years: View of rear of new house. Mostly screened by existing mature trees and vegetation. Overall - viewing experience slightly improved	L Beneficial	H	M Beneficial

	Location	Receptor	Current	Change	Magnitude	Sensitivity	Significance
				by new high quality single family home.			
V3	Public Footpath along access track on eastern boundary of site	Walkers on public footpath	Clear views of Rooflines of Barns and Farmhouse on the skyline and buildings elevation below. The Bungalow is the dominant built form at this location.	Construction: Views of demolition and clearance of house and barns; and then, construction of front of new house. Some of site partly screened by existing mature trees and vegetation. Construction traffic along farm track shared with public footpath. 1 Year: Views of new house frontage and eastern side elevation. Built element roofline partially screened by new trees and vegetation on site and in hedgerows. Overall - viewing experience slightly improved by new high quality single family home. 15 Years: Views of new house frontage and eastern side elevation. built elements with changes that are virtually imperceptible. Some screened by new trees and vegetation on site. Overall - viewing experience slightly improved by new high quality single family home.	L Beneficial	H	M Beneficial
V4	Public Footpath further south along access track on eastern boundary of site	Walkers on public footway	Clear views of Rooflines of Barns and Farmhouse on the skyline and buildings elevation below.	Construction: Views of demolition and clearance of house and barns; and then, construction of front of new house. Some of site partly screened by existing mature trees and vegetation. Construction traffic along farm track shared with public footpath.	L Beneficial	H	M Beneficial

	Location	Receptor	Current	Change	Magnitude	Sensitivity	Significance
				1 Year: Views of new house frontage. Built element partly screened by new trees and vegetation on. Overall - viewing experience slightly improved by new high quality single family home. 15 Years: Views of new house frontage. Built elements improved partial screening by new trees and vegetation on site. Overall - viewing experience slightly improved by new high quality single family home.			
V5	Public Footpath in field to south of Site	Walkers on public footway	Clear views of Rooflines of Barns and Farmhouse on the skyline and building elevation below.	Construction: Views of demolition and clearance of house and barns; and then, construction of front of new house. Some of site partly screened by existing mature trees and vegetation. Construction traffic clearly visible along farm track to north shared with public footpath. 1 Year: Views of new house frontage. Built element partially screened by new trees and vegetation on site and in hedgerows. Overall - viewing experience slightly improved by new high quality single family home. 15 Years: Views of new house frontage. Built elements improved partial screen by new trees and vegetation on site. Overall - viewing experience slightly improved by new high quality single family home.	L Beneficial	H	M Beneficial

	Location	Receptor	Current	Change	Magnitude	Sensitivity	Significance
V6	Public Footpath in gateway of next field to south of Site	Walkers on public footway	Relatively distant view of house and barns in distance when leaves not on hedges. In summer virtually no glimpse views.	Construction: Distant views demolition and clearance of house and barns; and then, construction of front of new house. Some of site partly screened by existing mature trees and vegetation. 1 Year: Views of frontage of new house. Built element partially screened by new trees and vegetation on site and in hedgerows. Overall - viewing experience slightly improved by new high quality single family home. 15 Years: Views of frontage of new house. Built elements partially screened by new trees and vegetation on site and in hedgerows. Overall - viewing experience slightly improved by new high quality single family home.	L Beneficial	H	M Beneficial
V7	Public Footpath in field next to B5000	Walkers on public footway		Construction: Distant views in winter of demolition and clearance of house and barns; and then, construction of front of new house. Some of site screened by existing mature trees and vegetation. 1 Year: Glimpse views in winter of frontage of new house. Built element roofline partially screened by new trees and vegetation on site and in hedgerows. 15 Years: Glimpse views in winter of frontage of new house. Built element	Negligible	H	Negligible

	Location	Receptor	Current	Change	Magnitude	Sensitivity	Significance
				roofline improved partial screen by new trees and vegetation on site and in hedgerows.			
V8	B5000 Glimpse through roadside hedgerow	Users of B5000	Glimpse view of house and barns in distance when leaves not on hedges. In summer virtually no glimpse views.	Construction: Glimpse views in winter of demolition and clearance of house and barns in distance; and then, construction of front of new house. Some of site screened by existing mature trees and vegetation. 1 Year: Glimpse views in winter of frontage of new house. Built element roofline partially screened by new trees and vegetation on site and in hedgerows. 15 Years: Glimpse views in winter of frontage of new house. Built element roofline improved partial screen by new trees and vegetation on site and in hedgerows.	Negligible	M	Negligible
V9	View from entrance to Highfields Farm (public footpath)	Walkers on public footway	No view (due to rising topography) of house and barns	Construction: No view (due to rising topography) of demolition and clearance of end of barns; and then, view of construction of rear of new house. Site screened by existing mature trees and vegetation and slope. 1 Year: No view of new house. 15 Years: No view of new house.	No change	H	No change
V10	View from entrance and track to Barnacle's Plantation (not a public footpath)	Users of B5000	Distant views of end of dilapidated C20s barns D2, B3, B4 and B5 near horizon. Some of site screened by existing	Construction: Virtually imperceptible view of demolition and clearance of end of barns; and then, construction of rear of new house. New single house will reduce	Negligible	M	Negligible

	Location	Receptor	Current	Change	Magnitude	Sensitivity	Significance
			mature trees and vegetation.	longitudinal expanse of buildings seen from this direction by approx. 50%. Some of site screened by existing mature trees and vegetation. 1 Year: Virtually imperceptible view of western end of new house. Reduced views of built elements partially screened by existing mature trees and vegetation. 15 Years: Virtually imperceptible view of western end of new house. Reduced views of built elements but improved partially screen by existing and new trees and vegetation.			
V11	View from roadside into gateway near The Smithy Farm Shop	Users of B5000	Very distant views of end of dilapidated C20s barns D2, B3, B4 and B5 near horizon. Some of site screened by existing mature trees and vegetation.	Construction: Virtually imperceptible view of demolition and clearance of end of barns; and then, construction of rear of new house. New single house will reduce longitudinal expanse of buildings seen from this direction by approx. 50%. Some of site screened by existing mature trees and vegetation. 1 Year: Virtually imperceptible view of western end of new house. Reduced views of built elements partially screened by existing mature trees and vegetation. 15 Years: Virtually imperceptible view of western end of new house. Reduced views of built elements	Negligible	M	Negligible

	Location	Receptor	Current	Change	Magnitude	Sensitivity	Significance
				partly screened by existing and new trees and vegetation.			
V12	View from field to west of site (private field)	Private individuals	View of dilapidated C20s barns and farmhouse. Some of site screened by existing mature trees and vegetation.	Construction: View of demolition and clearance of farmhouse and barns; and then, construction of rear of new house. New single house will reduce longitudinal expanse of buildings seen from this direction by approx. 70%. Some of site screened by existing mature trees and vegetation. 1 Year: Views of western end and rear of new house. Reduced views of built elements partially screened by existing mature trees and vegetation. Overall - viewing experience slightly improved by new high quality single family home. 15 Years: Views of western end of rear of new house. Reduced views of built elements with improved partial screen by existing and new trees and vegetation. Overall - viewing experience slightly improved by new high quality single family home.	L Beneficial	L	L Beneficial
V13	View from field boundary to northwest of site (private field)	Private individuals	View of dilapidated C20s barns. Some of site screened by existing mature trees and vegetation.	Construction: View of demolition and clearance of farmhouse and barns; and then, construction of rear of new house. New house will reduce longitudinal expanse of buildings seen from this direction by approx. 60%.	L Beneficial	L	L Beneficial

	Location	Receptor	Current	Change	Magnitude	Sensitivity	Significance
				Some of site screened by existing mature trees and vegetation. 1 Year: Views of western end and rear of new house. Reduced views of built elements partially screened by existing mature trees and vegetation. Overall - viewing experience slightly improved by new high quality single family home. 15 Years: Views of western end of rear of new house. Reduced views of built elements partly screened by existing and new trees and vegetation. Overall - viewing experience slightly improved by new high quality single family home.			
V14	View from NW corner of field to North of Site (private field)	Private individuals	Relatively distant view of farmhouse and barns; Some of site screened by existing mature trees and vegetation.	Construction: Relatively distant view of demolition of farmhouse and barns; and then, construction of rear of new house. Some of site screened by existing mature trees and vegetation. 1 Year: Views of rear of new house. Some screened by existing mature trees and vegetation. Overall - viewing experience slightly improved by new high quality single family home. 15 Years: Views of rear of new house. Partly screened by existing and new trees and vegetation. Overall - viewing experience slightly improved	L Beneficial	L	L Beneficial

	Location	Receptor	Current	Change	Magnitude	Sensitivity	Significance
				by new high quality single family home.			
V15	View from farm track entrance off Crow Lane	Users of Crow Lane	Relatively distant view of front barns B4 and B5 and part of house. Mostly screened by existing mature trees and vegetation.	Construction: Distant glimpse view of demolition of farmhouse and barns; and then, construction of new house. Mostly screened by existing mature trees and vegetation. Construction traffic along farm track and Crow Lane 1 Year: Distant glimpse view of western wing of new house set back from existing Barn 4. Mostly screened by existing mature trees and vegetation. Overall - viewing experience slightly improved by new high quality single family home. 15 Years: Distant glimpse view of western wing of new house set back from existing Barn 4. Mostly screened by existing mature trees and vegetation. Overall - viewing experience slightly improved by new high quality single family home.	L Beneficial	M	L Beneficial

Key Magnitude, Sensitivity & Significance
High; H = High; VH = Very High

O = None; N = Negligible; VL = Very Low; L = Low; ML = Medium-Low; M = Medium; MH = Medium-High; H = High; VH = Very High

8. SUMMARY OF LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACTS

Summary of Landscape Impact Assessment

The inherent value of the landscape itself

8.1 The site is not a 'valued landscape' in NPPF terms, however, it currently part of the inherently valued open countryside in this part of Leicestershire. The site is identified as being a part of the area zoned as Medium Landscape Sensitivity in terms of new development in the HBBC LSA (2017).

8.2 The replacement of the integrated farmstead despite its dilapidated state, with 5 new residential houses and farmhouse (as approved) would clearly be a significant adverse change in the landscape character of this localised area. Isolated groups of individual houses are not characteristic of this rural landscape area – and would result in the strange, localised suburbanisation of part of the rural landscape.

8.3 However, the replacement of the integrated dilapidated farmstead with a new farmhouse is entirely characteristic of this and many other landscape character areas. One single farmhouse does not read as localised urbanisation but as a typical built form of this landscape character area.

Amenity value

8.4 The current views and 'countryside experiences' when viewed from the east can be enjoyed by walkers along public footpath from the B5000 which partly follows the eastern boundary of the site. Such experiences will not be diminished. Isolated farm houses and even country houses are a feature of this Landscaped Character Area and so the change from a derelict farmstead to a new family home is a natural and acceptable change within this context. It is judged that in overall terms, the viewing experience will be slightly improved by new high-quality designed farmhouse. Within the wider landscape, the general visual amenity value of the rural landscape will not be changed by the development,

Ecological value

8.5 Features of natural heritage within the site are limited to ecological habitat in the form of the boundary hedgerows and a low number of hedgerow trees. The grassland areas are improved grassland. There is currently an off-site pool. There will be no loss of habitat and biodiversity; and, the planting of additional native trees and both on site and off site will improve the overall ecological value of the site.

Tranquillity

8.6 The current site is relatively tranquil. Historically there has been an occupied farmhouse on this site until recent years. There is predicted to be no significant change in the tranquillity of the site.

Value as a setting for components of the historic environment

8.7 Whilst there are no listed buildings or scheduled ancient monuments in the immediate vicinity of the site, the importance of the large open rural fields is acknowledged and will not change.

Summary Visual Impact Assessment

8.8 Once all the works have been completed and the mitigation landscape planting it has been assessed that there will an overall enhancement of the visual experience for both public and private viewers.

Figure 57: View of Existing Dilapidated Farmstead and Derelict Farmhouse behind



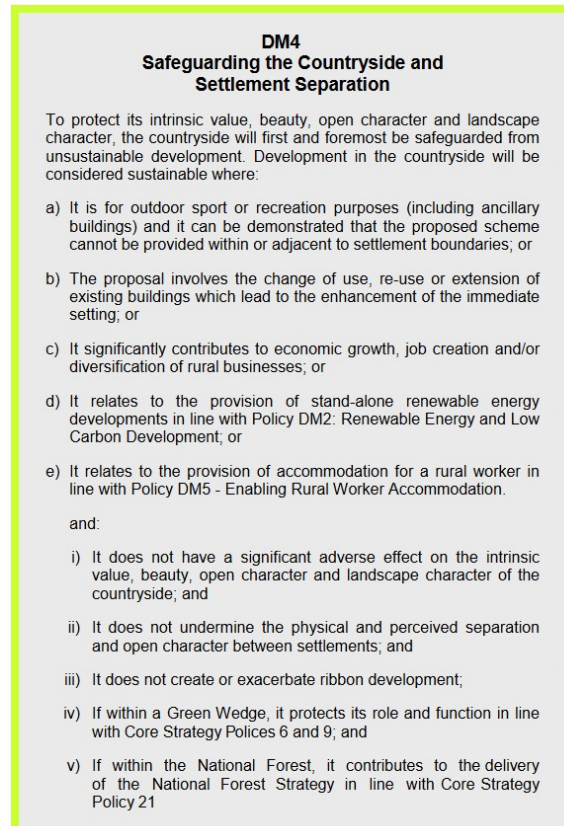
Figure 58: Visualisation of Proposed Farmhouse in Mature Landscape Setting



9.0 Conclusions

9.1 It is my professional judgement that the proposed development would “...protect the intrinsic value, beauty and open character of this countryside location” as required by policy DM4 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD 2016

Figure 59: HBBC Policy DM4



9.2 The site has already been approved for a change of use from agricultural to residential with the approval of five new dwellings and a farmhouse, and associated domestic paraphernalia, cars, vehicle movements, etc. The reduction to one household greatly reduces these associated domestic paraphernalia items.

9.3 As discussed earlier, the previously approved change from agricultural to an isolated group of five individual new dwellings would not be normal feature within this Landscape Character. They would, in landscape terms, be a change that would adversely affect the rural character of this landscape character area.

9.4 The replacement of the existing building mass/volume with one single-family farmhouse of slightly less volume than approved dwellings, and which is characteristic of the local area and of high-quality design – does not adversely affect the character and appearance of the Landscape Character Area.

9.5 The proposed development clearly complies with the sub-requirements of Policy DM4 as:

- 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.

Appendix 1:

CV Dr David Hickie

Professional Qualifications:

Chartered Landscape Architect and Member of Landscape Institute (CMLI)

Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv)

Member of the Institute Environmental Management and Assessment (MIEMA)

Member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC)

Academic Qualifications:

BSc(Hons) Civil Engineering, University of Birmingham (1978)

MA Landscape Architecture, University of Sheffield (1981)

PhD Environmental Impact Assessment, University of Loughborough (1998)

Professional Experience:

2008 to date Managing Director and Principal Consultant: David Hickie Associates – environmental planning and landscape architecture consultants.

2005 to 2008 Chief Executive: Society for the Environment

1998 to 2005 Assistant Regional Director (and Head of Profession - Landscape Architects): English Heritage (now known as Historic England) - responsible for managing team of specialists providing expert advice for the Secretary of State DCMS and DCLG on a wide range of heritage environment matters.

1993 to 1998 Regional EIA Manager and Chief Landscape Architect: Environment Agency - member of the Landscape Institute's Working Group that developed the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (First Edition)' Author of national landscape and visual impact assessment guidelines. Developed EIA procedures now used worldwide.

1989 to 1993 Regional Conservation, Recreation and Navigation manager and Chief Landscape Architect: National Rivers Authority – developed national methodology for River Corridor Landscape Character Assessment. Developed and lectured on landscape and ecological guidelines for river and coastal habitat restoration.

1985 to 1989 Senior Landscape Architect: Severn Trent Water Authority

1983 to 1985 Senior Landscape Architect: Warwickshire County Council

Appendix 2:

European Landscape Convention

European Landscape Convention

[\(ETS No. 176\)](#)

Open for signature by the member States of the Council of Europe, in Florence, on 20 October 2000.

Entry into force: 1 March 2004.

Summary of the treaty

The Convention aims to encourage public authorities to adopt policies and measures at local, regional, national and international level for protecting, managing and planning landscapes throughout Europe. It covers all landscapes, both outstanding and ordinary, that determine the quality of people's living environment. The text provides for a flexible approach to landscapes whose specific features call for various types of action,

ranging from strict conservation through protection, management and improvement to actual creation.

The Convention proposes legal and financial measures at the national and international levels, aimed at shaping "landscape policies" and promoting interaction between local and central authorities as well as transfrontier cooperation in protecting landscapes. It sets out a range of different solutions which States can apply, according to their specific needs.

The Council of Europe intergovernmental committees will be supervising the convention's implementation. The text also provides for a Council of Europe Landscape award, to be given to local or regional authorities or an NGO which introduced exemplary and long-lasting policies or measures to protect, manage and plan landscapes.

<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/176.htm>