



PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT OF HALLS FARM, ALTAR STONES
LANE -
LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

September 2023

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1 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF REPORT

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Felstone Consulting Limited has been instructed by rg+p, on behalf of Hillmoren, to carry out a landscape and visual appraisal (LVA) of the proposed redevelopment of Halls Farm, Altar Stones Lane to accommodate their modern luxury car business.
- 1.1.2 This LVA has been carried out by Chartered Landscape Architects at Felstone Consulting Limited and includes desk-based research and photography from fieldwork carried out in September 2023.

1.2 Summary of the Proposed Development and Mitigation

- 1.2.1 The proposals comprise the relocation of the existing business (from Shaw Lane), with the construction of a 'farmstead style' development on the site. This includes two single storey replacement buildings with display and storage area, detailing and preparation building, office and meeting space, as well as parking provision and EV charging.
- 1.2.2 The overall landscape framework strategy is to retain and enhance the wooded character of the site, with positive management of individual trees (including some clearance and thinning to accommodate the development and improve habitat condition), formation of new areas of scrub edge and conservation grassland, with reinstatement of ponds / water features on site.
- 1.2.3 This would integrate the proposed replacement buildings and vehicle parking areas into their existing landscape context, create a pleasant working environment and destination for customers, and improve biodiversity interest.

1.3 Scope and Definitions

- 1.3.1 This appraisal takes account of the principles and processes set out in The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment's Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, third edition (GLVIA3), published in 2013.
- 1.3.2 Paragraph 5.1 of GLVIA3 describes how landscape effects are concerned with *"how the proposal will affect the elements that make up the landscape, the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape and its distinctive character"*.

- 1.3.3 Allied to this, paragraph 6.1 of GLVIA3 describes how visual effects are concerned with *“assessing how the surroundings of individuals or groups of people may be specifically affected by changes in the content and character of views as a result of the change or loss of existing elements of the landscape and/or introduction of new elements”*.
- 1.3.4 This assessment considers landscape and visual effects separately (although where relevant and appropriate, cross references may be made to the same features or elements).
- 1.3.5 The nature of effects are also described, including:
- adverse or negative effects, relating to the loss, deterioration or reduction of baseline landscape and visual conditions;
 - beneficial or positive effects relating to the addition, enhancement or enlargement of baseline landscape and visual conditions (or by virtue of good design); and
 - neutral effects include those changes which are neither adverse nor beneficial, or where there it is judged that there is a balance between adverse and beneficial (e.g. the proposal fits with existing character).

1.4 Methodology

- 1.4.1 The main source of guidance for this chapter has been GLVIA3 (*op. cit.*) and the method used in assessing landscape and visual effects is set out in Appendix 1.
- 1.4.2 In addition to GLVIA3, the Landscape Institute’s Technical Guidance Note 06/19 Visual Representation of Development (hereafter referred to as “LI TGN 06/19”) and Technical Guidance Note 02/21 Assessing Landscape Value outside National Designations (hereafter referred to as “LI TGN 02/21”) has also been referred to in the preparation of this appraisal, where relevant.
- 1.4.3 Annotated baseline photography is included to show the extent and position of the site and other existing features to act as an aid in assessing landscape and visual effects (defined as Type 1 in LI TGN 06/19). Photographs were taken using a Canon 6D camera and 50mm F1.4 USM Lens, with a Manfrotto tripod and panoramic head. The camera was set to a focal length which is the equivalent of a 50mm lens for a 35mm format camera. The panoramic views consist of several photographic frames digitally merged using industry standard software.

1.4.4 Visual effects vary depending on light and weather conditions and also the time of day and year. Accordingly, this assessment takes account of the conditions in the photographs but also considers alternative conditions within the written assessment.

1.4.5 No technical difficulties were encountered in assessing the landscape and visual impacts of the proposed development.

1.5 Structure of the Report

1.5.1 The following sections of the report are structured as follows:

- a summary review of landscape-related planning policy context;
- baseline conditions;
- appraisal of landscape and visual effects; and
- conclusions.

2 LANDSCAPE PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

2.1 National Planning Policy

- 2.1.1 National Planning Policy guidance is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the internet-based Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).
- 2.1.2 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and there is reference to recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.
- 2.1.3 Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments “*function well and add to the overall quality of the area.....are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping...are sympathetic to local character and history...*” (para 130). NPPF also refers to “*protecting and enhancing valued landscapes...*” (para 174).
- 2.1.4 The site is located within the National Forest and it is described within the NPPF how “*The National Forest and Community Forests offer valuable opportunities for improving the environment around towns and cities, by upgrading the landscape and providing for recreation and wildlife. The National Forest Strategy and an approved Community Forest Plan may be a material consideration in preparing development plans and in deciding planning applications*” (para 146).

2.2 Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan

- 2.2.1 The site is located in ‘Countryside’ as per the proposals map associated with the Hinckley and Bosworth Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD (2006-2026).
- 2.2.2 Policies within Natural Environment include DM4 - Safeguarding the Countryside and Settlement Separation, which states that “*To protect its intrinsic value, beauty, open character and landscape character, the countryside will first and foremost be safeguarded from unsustainable development.*” DM4 also states *inter alia* that “*Development in the countryside will be considered sustainable where:*
- “*i) It does not have a significant adverse effect on the intrinsic value, beauty, open character and landscape character of the countryside*”.

2.3 Markfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2039

2.3.1 The Markfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2039 referendum version also confirms that the site is located beyond the settlement limits to Markfield. Policy M1: Countryside states that *“The Countryside (land outside the Settlement Boundary defined on Map 2 and the Policies Maps) will be protected for the sake of its intrinsic character, beauty, heritage and wildlife, the wealth of its natural resources and to ensure it may be enjoyed by all.”*

2.3.2 Policy M2: Landscape Character states that *“Development should be located and designed in a way that is sensitive to its landscape setting, retaining and, where possible, enhancing the distinctive qualities of the landscape character area (identified on Figure 3) which it would affect. Development should:*

- *1. Conserve and, where possible, enhance the character and qualities of the local landscape through appropriate design of development proposals;*
- *2. Retain and where possible enhance woodland, hedgerows, mature trees, and stone walls as features of landscape importance unless it is demonstrated this is not viable or practicable;*
- *3. Be well integrated within the landscape with planting to soften urban edges;*
- *4. Be located and designed so as not to significantly harm the important long views from the publicly accessible locations at Billa Barra Hill, Hill Hole, and Altar Stones identified on the Map of Views; and*
- *5. Provide appropriate landscape mitigation and/or suitable off-site enhancements.”*

2.4 Planning Background

2.4.1 The site currently includes the disused Halls Farm buildings, associated with the former agricultural business (involved selling animals and animal products).

2.4.2 Planning approval exists to increase and intensify the use of the site by virtue of approval under ‘Class Q’ of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. An application was submitted to Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council under reference 22/00281/P3CQ which took effect 22 July

2022. It confirms the following development: '*Change of use of agricultural building to a single residential dwellinghouse*'.

3 LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

3.1 Landscape Baseline

3.1.1 The baseline conditions for the application site and its local setting have been assessed and described below.

Character of the Landscape

3.1.2 The site is located within Charnwood National Character Area 73, which is described as *"a unique landscape, marked out by its geology and upland qualities, which contrast with the surrounding gentle lowlands. It is formed by a mosaic of heathland, farmland, parkland and woodland. The underlying Precambrian geology has given rise to the distinct area of land characterised by exposures of rugged, rocky outcrops. It is a relatively well wooded landscape, with many areas of mixed, deciduous and coniferous woodlands."*

3.1.3 The National Forest's Charnwood Forest Landscape Character Assessment was published in 2019 and is the most recent and relevant for use in this appraisal¹. This identified the site as located within "Area 6: Thringstone/Markfield Quarries and Settlement" which referred *inter alia* to *"A highly settled landscape with a high proportion of quarries, often fringed with woodland. Farmland consists of a mix of arable and pasture with a varied field pattern while areas of new planting around quarries contrast with areas of ancient woodland."*

3.1.4 The key characteristics for "Area 6: Thringstone/Markfield Quarries and Settlement" include the following:

- *"Highly settled with Whitwick and Thringstone, Agar Nook, Stanton-under-Bardon and Markfield villages.*
- *Mix of landuses including arable, pasture and woodland as well as quarrying and associated spoil mounds.*
- *Fields enclosed by hedgerows with hedgerow trees as well as some walls and fences.*

¹ This is also the character assessment referenced in the Markfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan

- *Mix of woodland with pine plantations and mixed woodland as well as new plantations and grasslands associated with quarry restoration.*
- *Small scale regular fields on settlement edges and around peripheries of quarries, bound by hedgerows with hedgerow trees. Also, some walls along roads.*
- *Linear villages of Thringstone, Whitwick and Stanton-under-Bardon, with small number of scattered farms. Markfield is a large clustered village located on higher ground. Settlements link along roads with the A511/A50 corridor passing through.*
- *Large scale expansive views from higher levels often close to quarries. Background noise from industrial areas and settlements.”*

Landscape Elements and Features

- 3.1.5 The site includes four farmstead buildings associated with a former agricultural business, each with a footprint of approximately 155m², 67m², 186m² and 41m² and varying in height from the two-storey farmhouse (6.9m high to ridge and 4.5m to eaves) to single storey outbuildings (including up to 4.4m to ridge).
- 3.1.6 The site also includes an entrance driveway and areas of hardstanding (approximately 500m² including access), with some swathes of grassland, amongst a dominant cover of trees and woodland (including broadleaved and mixed woodland and introduced scrub). There are also sections of fencing, walling and hedgerow within and around the boundaries of the site and two ponds within the centre.
- 3.1.7 The topography of the site is gently sloping from north-east (at c191m AOD at the site entrance onto Altar Stones Lane) to the south-west (at 185m AOD).
- 3.1.8 Altar Stones Lane is located immediately to the north-east and east and provides access to the site. There are several farmstead buildings associated with Old Mill Farm and Cliffe Farm, where there is also mature tree cover. Altar Stones Cattery is located 100m to the south of the site.
- 3.1.9 The local setting of the site is dominated by Junction 22 of the M1 motorway immediately adjacent to the west and A50 (dual carriageway road) to the north.
- 3.1.10 There is a range of landscape elements to the west of the busy M1 road corridor (c100m across), with a few properties along Little Shaw Lane, Travelodge / SPAR Euro Garage

motorway service area, a paintballing centre and isolated property (Lilac Cottage). Cliffe Hill Quarry is c300m to the south-west of the site, with a belt of woodland planting along its boundary with Cliffe Lane.

- 3.1.11 There are several agricultural pasture fields and horse grazing located to the east of Altar Stones Lane, with Jubilee Playing Fields (and Markfield Cricket Pitch) located adjacent to the edge of Markfield settlement at c500m away (around Markfield Industrial Estate) and rising to above 200m AOD. Altar Stones Nature Reserve is located to the north of Altar Stones Lane and rises in elevation to 210m AOD with rock exposures.
- 3.1.12 The landscape to the north of the busy A50 road corridor includes Cliffe Farm farmstead and undulating agricultural land, rising to 224m AOD at White Hill.

Aesthetic and Perceptual Characteristics

- 3.1.13 The existing collection of farmstead buildings and hardstanding on the former Halls Farm site are small scale, enclosed by mixed woodland, trees and shrubs providing vertical elements, some complexity and muted greens and browns. The buildings comprise a range of horizontal and vertical lines and forms, textured and earthy shades of brown or grey. Although the site is currently still, this is as a result of the buildings being currently uninhabited whilst this planning application is progressed.
- 3.1.14 The M1 and A50 road corridors are large scale and have busy and colourful vehicle movements with lighting columns, which reduces the sense of tranquillity on the site. Altar Stones Lane is smaller scale and quieter in comparison, although the presence of the A50 and M1 is still apparent (from glimpsed views westwards along the lane and the sound of passing vehicles).
- 3.1.15 The agricultural grassland fields to the east and north are typically small to medium scale, relatively simple and gently rolling to undulating with muted greens and browns depending on management. Rock exposures are greys and pinks.
- 3.1.16 The scattering of farmsteads and properties in the local area, in conjunction with the motorway service area and paintballing centre add some diversity, forms, lines and colours, to varying degrees. The existing mineral workings at Cliffe Hill Quarry are large scale, enclosed by the depth of the voids and mature perimeter tree planting.

- 3.1.17 Woodland and trees are important elements, adding diversity in terms of vertical forms and lines, darker greens and earthy brown colours and texture to the local area, but also breaking up the visibility of the highways infrastructure and other development.

Classification of Site and Immediate Surroundings

- 3.1.18 The analysis of existing landscape attributes has concluded that the site is generally consistent with the key characteristics in the published landscape character assessments and in particular “Area 6: Thringstone/Markfield Quarries and Settlement”.

- 3.1.19 At a local level, the site is classified as “Farmstead Buildings, Trees and Woodland”.

Landscape value

- 3.1.20 The application site does not form part of any national valued landscape designation, such as a National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

- 3.1.21 The site is located within the National Forest and within Charnwood Forest. “Area 6: Thringstone/Markfield Quarries and Settlement” refers to *“a changing landscape heavily influenced by settlement and quarrying with urban fringe influences which results in a generally low landscape condition, although areas of interspersed farmland and restoration schemes are managed and of a medium condition.”*

- 3.1.22 The woodland and trees on site form part of the distinctive character of the area and are identified as ‘Local Green Infrastructure’ within the Markfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan.

- 3.1.23 However, the small farmstead buildings on site are not considered to be rare. The perceptual aspects of wildness and tranquillity are influenced by the adjacent M1 and A50. No evidence of artistic or literary associations with the application site or immediately surrounding study area has been noted as part of this appraisal.

- 3.1.24 Overall, the site is not considered to be valued landscape, for the purposes of NPFF.

3.2 Prediction of Landscape Effects

- 3.2.1 The appraisal of landscape effects is carried out for each effect thought likely to occur and for the relevant receptor that may be altered by the scheme.

Physical Disturbance of Individual Elements and Features

- 3.2.2 The proposal would necessitate the demolition and clearance of the existing farmstead buildings, hardstanding and several trees and grassland that are within the footprint of the new buildings and hardstanding, as follows:
- The two proposed replacement farmstead style buildings would extend over 1,950m², an increase in footprint of c1,500m² in comparison to existing; and
 - The proposed vehicle parking areas and hardstanding would extend over 2,948m², an increase in footprint of c2,448m², with modifications to the northern access (addition of bellmouth and 6m wide access road, with inward opening gates, set back from the adopted highway). The existing access to the south-east will be maintained in its current form (other than removal of vegetation and potential replacement of security gates, with inward opening / sliding gates).
- 3.2.3 The heights of the new buildings would also be taller than existing, with Building A being 4.7m to eaves and 9.4m to ridge and Building B being 4.3m to eaves and 9m to ridge, at the highest points. This is approximately 2.1m higher than the highest part of the existing farmhouse.
- 3.2.4 Some selective tree clearance, pruning and crown reduction work along the southern site boundary may also be beneficial to minimise shading of the proposed solar panels on the roofs of the new Buildings A and B.
- 3.2.5 The landscape strategy includes the retention and enhancement of 5,692m² of existing woodland, 302m² of introduced scrub, 764m² of improved grassland and 564m² of pond.
- 3.2.6 In addition, 1,471m² of mixed native scrub is proposed, along with 514m² of conservation grassland (woodland edge). The site boundary elements (stone walls, hedgerows, and fencing) and existing entrances would be retained.
- 3.2.7 Although the proposed built elements would be larger than existing, they would remain a relatively small part of the wider 14,205m² site boundary, which would retain its overall well-wooded character.
- 3.2.8 The development would introduce additional vehicle movements, with new cars driven onto site, as well as staff, deliveries (general post and packages) and waste collection.

Visitors will be by appointment only and up to 2 at any one time. The vehicle movements would be low level and in the context of the existing road and nearby properties, parking at Altar Stones Lane Nature Reserve, Markfield Industrial Estate (and also that of the busy A50 and M1).

3.2.9 There would be no valued landscape elements or features lost as a result of the proposals. Any clearance and thinning of trees would accommodate the development and seek to improve the overall condition of the woodland habitat.

3.2.10 The landscape elements and features have a medium-low sensitivity to the proposals and would receive a slight and neutral magnitude of change (the proposal fits within the existing well-wooded farmstead character on the site). The overall effects would be minor and neutral.

Alterations to Aesthetic and Perceptual Characteristics

3.2.11 The proposed collection of new farmstead-style buildings and hardstanding would still be small scale and remain enclosed by the well-wooded character of the retained trees and shrubs.

3.2.12 The proposed buildings would comprise horizontal and vertical lines and forms, with textured and earthy shades of charred timber and dark grey cladding walls, with anthracite zinc roof. Solar panels are also proposed on the roofs of Buildings A and B. Mounted showroom signage and individual vehicles would add a wider range of colours and forms.

3.2.13 The site would become more active during working hours, albeit in the context of the adjacent M1 and A50 (where the sense of tranquillity is already reduced) and Markfield Industrial Estate and parking for Altar Stones Lane Nature Reserve. Lighting would also be required at certain times of day and year and a scheme would be devised to minimise potentially obtrusive light.

3.2.14 The aesthetic or perceptual aspects at the site have a medium-low sensitivity to the proposals and would receive a slight and neutral magnitude of change (with the main changes relating to the increase in diversity, colour and movement, within the enclosed and small-scale site). The overall effects would be no more than minor and neutral.

Changes to Overall Landscape Character

- 3.2.15 The key characteristics of “Area 6: Thringstone/Markfield Quarries and Settlement” would be unchanged as a result of the proposed development, which would affect a very localised part of the area and a single farmstead. At a local level, the site would be re-classified as ‘Farmstead-style Buildings, Trees and Woodland’.
- 3.2.16 “Area 6: Thringstone/Markfield Quarries and Settlement” has a medium-low sensitivity to the proposals and would receive a negligible and neutral magnitude of change. The area would remain as a “*highly settled landscape*”. The overall effects would be no more than minor-negligible and neutral.

4 VISUAL EFFECTS

4.1 Visual Baseline

4.1.1 Baseline conditions for the site and surrounding area is set out below.

Visual receptors

4.1.2 Visual receptors include people living in the area; people who work there; people passing through by road; people visiting promoted landscapes or attractions; and people engaged in recreation.

4.1.3 Initially, it is necessary to define the extent of visibility both within and outside the application site and how it relates to potential receptors. This appraisal included a desk-based review and fieldwork to the site and surrounding area and identified that the proposals would be well contained by the existing vegetation and undulating topography, as well as built elements, M1 junction and A50 road corridor.

4.1.4 Key potential visual receptors include the following:

- local residents at properties around Old Mill Farm, Cliffe Farm and Altar Stones Lane Cattery;
- Users of the local road network such as Altar Stones Lane, as well as A50 and M1; and
- Recreational visitors to Altar Stones Nature Reserve, Hill Hole and Billa Barra Hill (including the viewpoints identified on Map 3 of the Markfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan).

4.1.5 In order to provide proportionality within the appraisal, the following visual receptors (which were identified during the fieldwork to have restricted visibility due to distance away, topography, vegetation or other intervening features), are not considered in any more detail:

- inhabitants of settlements, such as Markfield, Stanton-under Bardon and Copt Oak, and local residents within other individual properties and farmsteads in the wider area (including Cliffe Hill Farm, Oak Tree Farm, White Hill, Stanton Lane Farm, Ulverscroft Cottage Farm and Lilac Cottage);

- users of the local road network connecting villages and settlements such as Little Shaw Lane, Copt Oak Road, Whitwick Road, Priory Lane, Hill Lane and Cliffe Lane; and
- users of the more distant public rights of way and recreational attractions, including visitors at Ulverscroft Nature Reserve, Charley Woods Nature Reserve or Stoneywell National Trust property.

Viewpoints – representative, specific, illustrative

4.1.6 Representative viewpoints have been selected for the purpose of this appraisal at the locations shown on Figure 1 below. Baseline photographs of existing views from each of these locations shown on the accompanying drawing sheets:

- Viewpoint 1 - A50 on Junction 22 of M1 and by Cliffe Hill Farm Entrance (Drawing LVIA 1), which shows a glimpsed view of the trees along the northern boundary of the site, beyond the busy road corridor;
- Viewpoint 2 - Altar Stones Lane, by northern site entrance (Drawing LVIA 2) which shows entrance gate and mature trees, as well as properties at Old Mill Farm and Cliffe Farm to the east;
- Viewpoint 3 - Altar Stones Lane by eastern site entrance (Drawing LVIA 3), which shows the entrance gate and mature trees along site boundary, as well as properties at Cliffe Farm to the north;
- Viewpoint 4 - Altar Stones Lane, by Old Mill Farm and Cliffe Farm (Drawing LVIA 4) which shows mature trees along northern site boundary; and
- Viewpoint 5 - Altar Stone Nature Reserve (Drawing LVIA 5), which shows elevated panoramic views to the south and west, with the existing roof and chimneys at Halls Farm set down amongst mature trees and barely perceptible.

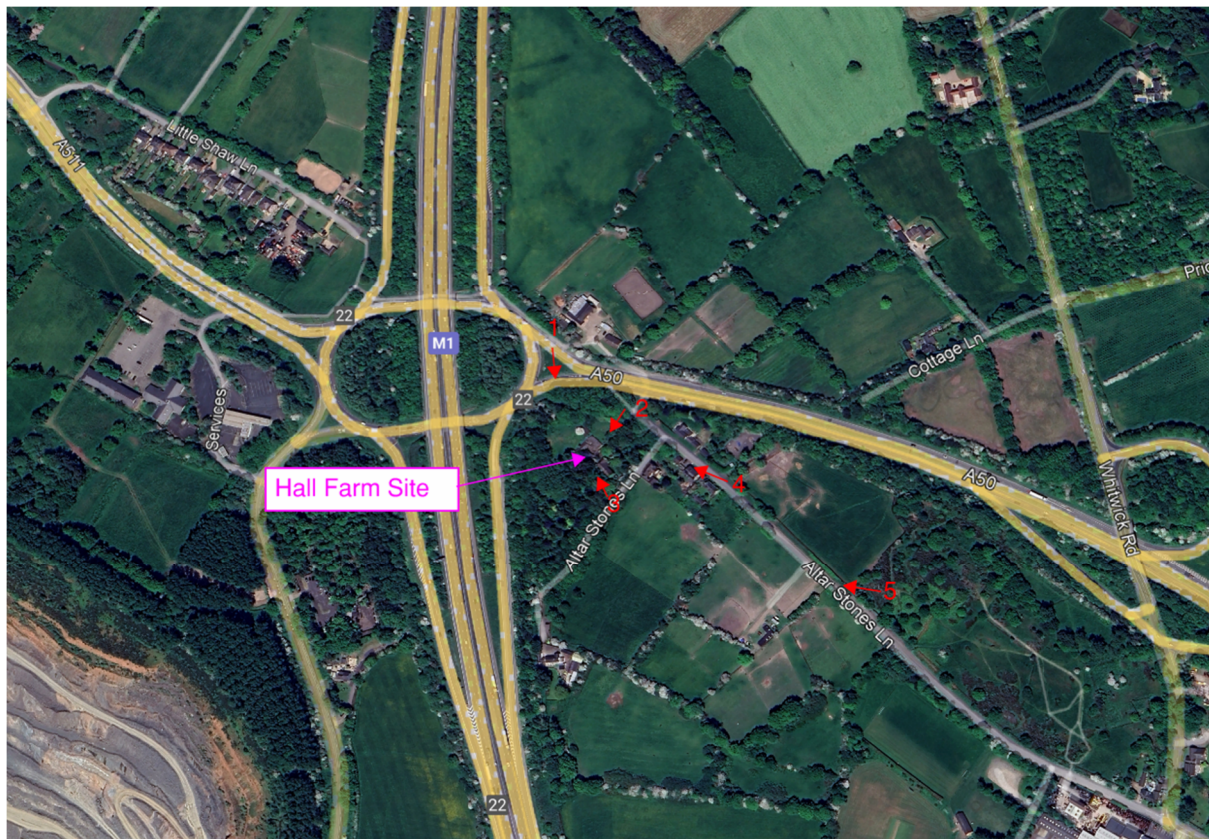


Figure 1 – Viewpoint Locations (Google Earth background, 05-2023)

4.2 Prediction of Visual Effects

4.2.1 The appraisal of visual effects is carried out for each effect thought likely to occur and for the relevant receptor that may be altered by the scheme.

Effects at individual viewpoints

4.2.2 A summary of effects at each representative viewpoint is as follows:

- Viewpoint 1 - A50 on Junction 22 of M1 and by Cliffe Hill Farm Entrance. People at this location (passing road users) would have a low sensitivity to the proposals and experience a negligible and neutral magnitude of change, with the development mostly obscured by intervening vegetation at over 50m away, beyond the busy road junction. The overall visual effects at this location would be negligible and neutral;
- Viewpoint 2 - Altar Stones Lane, by northern site entrance. People at this location (road users accessing residential properties and Altar Stones Nature Reserve) would have a medium-low sensitivity to the proposals and experience a slight and

neutral magnitude of change, with alteration to the northern driveway / entrance and the addition of passing vehicles. The buildings themselves are likely to be mostly obscured by the retained boundary woodland and trees. The overall visual effects at this location would be minor and neutral;

- Viewpoint 3 - Altar Stones Lane by eastern site entrance. People at this location (road users accessing residential properties and Altar Stones Nature Reserve) would have a medium-low sensitivity to the proposals and experience a slight and neutral magnitude of change, with the addition of passing vehicles. The buildings themselves are likely to be mostly obscured by the retained boundary woodland and trees. The overall visual effects at this location would be minor and neutral;
- Viewpoint 4 - Altar Stones Lane, by Old Mill Farm and Cliffe Farm. People at this location (local residents) would have a medium sensitivity to the proposals and experience a slight and neutral magnitude of change with alteration to the northern driveway / entrance and the addition of passing vehicles. The buildings themselves are likely to be mostly obscured by the retained woodland and trees along the site boundary at c50m away. The overall visual effects at this location would be minor and neutral; and
- Viewpoint 5 - Altar Stone Nature Reserve. People at this location (recreational visitors) would have a high-medium sensitivity to the proposals and experience a negligible and neutral magnitude of change, with the replacement buildings set down amongst the trees at c200m away and with the wider panoramic, long views unchanged. The overall visual effects at this location would be minor and neutral.

4.2.3 In each case, the proposal fits with the existing character, either by being concealed by the retained trees and woodland and therefore mostly hidden, or where visible, being farmstead-style development and part of the wider context of settled countryside. The addition of passing traffic would be perceptible along Altar Stones Lane.

Communities within Settlements and Residents of other properties

4.2.4 Local residents within individual properties and farmsteads, around Old Mill Farm, Cliffe Farm and Altar Stones Cattery would have a medium sensitivity to the proposals and experience a slight and neutral magnitude of change with alteration to the northern driveway / entrance and the addition of passing vehicles. The buildings themselves are likely to be mostly obscured by the retained woodland and trees along the site

boundary and seen from only a few locations. The overall visual effects would be minor and neutral.

Users of road network

4.2.5 Users of Altar Stones Lane would have a medium-low sensitivity to the proposals and experience a slight and neutral magnitude of change with alteration to the northern driveway / entrance and the addition of passing vehicles. The buildings themselves are likely to be mostly obscured by the retained vegetation along the site boundary and seen from a limited proportion of the route. The overall visual effects would be minor and neutral.

4.2.6 Users of M1 and A50 would have a low sensitivity to the proposals and experience a negligible and neutral magnitude of change with the replacement buildings likely to be mostly obscured by the retained vegetation along the site boundary seen from a very limited proportion of these routes (and often offset to the direction of travel). The overall visual effects at this location would be negligible and neutral.

Visitors to recreational facilities

4.2.7 Recreational visitors to Altar Stones Nature Reserve would have a high-medium sensitivity to the proposals and experience a negligible and neutral magnitude of change. The replacement buildings would be over 200m away and set down by c10m, amongst trees and with the wider panoramic, long views unchanged. The overall visual effects at this location would be minor and neutral.

4.2.8 Recreational visitors to Hill Hole Nature Reserve would have a high-medium sensitivity to the proposals but would experience no perceptible change to views. The replacement buildings would be over 800m away and set down by c10m, amongst trees and with the wider panoramic, long views unchanged.

4.2.9 Recreational visitors to Billa Barra Nature Reserve would have a high-medium sensitivity to the proposals but would experience no perceptible change to views. The replacement buildings would be over 1km away, set down by c20m, amongst trees and with the wider panoramic, long views unchanged.

5 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Conclusions

- 5.1.1 This appraisal of the proposals at Halls Farm, Altar Stones Lane, to accommodate a new modern luxury car business within a farmstead-style development, has reviewed the current baseline conditions and predicted landscape and visual effects.
- 5.1.2 The landscape framework strategy seeks to retain and enhance the wooded character of the site, whilst integrating the development into its existing landscape context.
- 5.1.3 The proposals would be visually attractive with good architecture (natural and muted materials and colours of the charred timber and dark clad walls and anthracite roof), layout (positioned away from the site entrance gateways) and appropriate and effective landscaping (with retention and enhancement of woodland habitats, and additional planting), which is sympathetic to the local Charnwood Forest character.
- 5.1.4 The overall landscape effects upon the intrinsic value, beauty and character of the countryside at this location would be neutral. The proposal would fit with the existing well-wooded farmstead character, accessed via an established road corridor and immediately adjacent to the busy Junction 22 of the M1 and A50. Thus, the character and qualities of the wider landscape would be conserved.
- 5.1.5 The existing woodland, hedgerows, mature trees, and stone walls would be retained and enhanced as far as possible, although some clearance and thinning to accommodate the development would be necessary, which would be used for the improvement of the condition of the woodland habitat.
- 5.1.6 The proposals would be located and designed so as not to harm the important long views from the publicly accessible locations at Billa Barra Hill, Hill Hole, and Altar Stones as identified on the Map of Views within the Markfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2039.
- 5.1.7 Views from other nearby receptors, such as local residents and road users would also be limited, due to the retention of the perimeter vegetation and building design.
- 5.1.8 The proposed buildings and vehicle parking areas would create a pleasant working environment and destination for customers.

LVIA METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) follows the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition), published by Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (hereafter referred to as “GLVIA 3”).

In reading the following methodology, it is important to also refer to the detailed guidance and considerations set out in GLVIA 3.

GLVIA3 describes how *“The EIA Directive and UK Regulations refer to projects likely to have significant effects on the environment. This means that identifying and describing the effects of a project is not enough in itself. They must also be assessed for their significance. This is a key part of the LVIA process and is an evidence-based process combined with professional judgement. It is important that the basis of such judgements is transparent and understandable, so that the underlying assumptions and reasoning can be understood by others.”*

The determination of significant effects follows the step-by-step process shown in Figure 3.5 of GLVIA3 and is based on the combination of the sensitivity of the receptor (susceptibility to the type of change proposed and value) and the magnitude of effect (size/scale, geographical extent, duration and reversibility).

“Major Effects” and “Moderate / Major Effects” identified in the LVIA chapter are regarded as “significant” in the context of the EIA Regulations.

Landscape Effects

Paragraph 5.1 of GLVIA3 describes how landscape effects are concerned with *“how the proposal will affect the elements that make up the landscape, the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape and its distinctive character”*.

Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors

In relation to sensitivity, Paragraph 5.39 of GLVIA states that *“Landscape receptors need to be assessed firstly in terms of their sensitivity, combining judgements of their susceptibility to the type of change or development proposed and the value attached to the landscape.”*

The susceptibility to the type of change of each landscape receptor will be judged as either high, medium or low, in accordance with the considerations set out in the table below.

Susceptibility to Type of Change Proposed	Considerations
High	The landscape receptor (including the elements that make up the landscape, the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape and its distinctive character) has very limited or no ability to accommodate the proposed development without undue negative consequences for the maintenance of

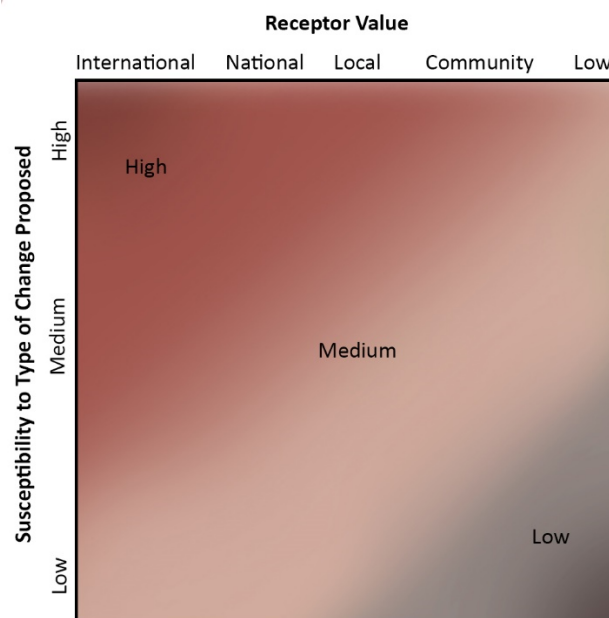
	the baseline situation and/or achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.
Medium	The landscape receptor (including the elements that make up the landscape, the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape and its distinctive character) has some ability to accommodate the proposed development without negative consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.
Low	The landscape receptor (including the elements that make up the landscape, the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape and its distinctive character) is generally able to accommodate the proposed development whilst ensuring the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.

The value of the landscape receptors will be judged as either international, national, local, community or as a low level, in accordance with the considerations set out in the table below. This may reflect landscape designations and the level of importance which they signify, although there should not be an over-reliance on designations as the sole indicator of value. Other criteria such as those in Table 1 in the Landscape Institute's TGN-02/21 should also be considered (including landscape condition, natural heritage, cultural heritage, associative, distinctiveness, recreational, scenic, perceptual and spatial function).

Landscape Value	Considerations
International	The landscape receptor (including the elements that make up the landscape, the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape and its distinctive character) are identified as being of international importance according to UNESCO criteria. This would include World Heritage Sites, candidate World Heritage Site. Consideration should be given to their settings especially where these contribute to the attributes of outstanding universal value for which such an area of landscape is valued.
National	The landscape receptor (including the elements that make up the landscape, the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape and its distinctive character) is identified as being of national importance. This would include National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, National Scenic Areas (in Scotland) or equivalent areas. Gardens and designed landscapes included on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest as Grade I, II* or II or included in Historic Scotland's Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland. Consideration should be given to their settings especially where these contribute to the special qualities for which the landscape is valued.

Local	The landscape receptor (including the elements that make up the landscape, the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape and its distinctive character) is identified as having value, which are either recognised at the local authority level by a local designation or considered to be of equivalent value using other criteria.
Community	The landscape receptor (including the elements that make up the landscape, the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape and its distinctive character) is not nationally or locally designated, or judged to be of equivalent value, but nevertheless valued at a community level.
Low	The landscape receptor (including the elements that make up the landscape, the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape and its distinctive character) is not designated or has demonstrable physical attributes that elevates its value, which are in poor condition, or are degraded, or fundamentally altered by the presence of man-made structures (which are judged to be intrusive).

The overall sensitivity of each landscape receptor assessed will be judged by combining the considerations of susceptibility to the type of change proposed and value. The table below provides an indication of how these judgements might be combined and should be reviewed in conjunction with the more detailed guidance set out in GLVIA 3.



Magnitude of Landscape Effects

In relation to magnitude, Paragraph 5.48 of GLVIA states that *“Each effect on landscape receptors need to be assessed in terms of its size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and reversibility.”*

The size or scale of landscape effect will be recorded as large, medium, small, or negligible, in accordance with the considerations as set out in the table below. No change may also be recorded, where appropriate.

Size or Scale of Landscape Change	Considerations
Large	• large extent of loss of existing features or addition of new features, high proportion of the total extent that this represents and /or key contribution that the element makes to the character of the landscape; and/or • large degree of change to aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape as a result of removal of existing components or addition of new ones (eg removal of hedges may change a small-scale intimate landscape into a large-scale, open landscape) • direct and large degree of change (loss or addition) to key characteristics which are critical to distinctive character (e.g. development becomes a dominant feature in the landscape, changing the balance of landscape characteristics and/or would dominate important visual connections with other landscape types).
Medium	• medium extent of loss of existing features or addition of new features, medium proportion of the total extent that this represents and /or moderate contribution that the element makes to the character of the landscape; and/or • medium degree of change to aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape as a result of removal of existing components or addition of new ones (e.g. removal of hedges may change a small-scale intimate landscape into a medium-scale, more open landscape) • medium degree of change (loss or addition) to key characteristics which contribute to distinctive character (e.g. the proposed development would be prominent but would not change the overall balance or composition of the landscape; and/or key visual connections to other landscape types may be interrupted intermittently by the proposed development, but these connections would not be dominated by them.)

Small	• small extent of loss of existing features or addition of new features, small proportion of the total extent that this represents and /or limited contribution that the element makes to the character of the landscape; and/or • small degree of change to aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape as a result of removal of existing components or addition of new ones (e.g. removal of hedges may change a small-scale intimate landscape into a small-scale, more open landscape) • little to no change (loss or addition) to key characteristics which contribute to distinctive character (e.g. there would be no introduction of new elements into the landscape and the proposed development would not significantly change the composition/balance of the landscape.)
Negligible	There would be a negligible level or no perceptible change to the extent of existing landscape elements, aesthetic and perceptual aspects, key characteristics or landscape character (e.g. the proposed development would be a small element and/or would be a considerable distance from the landscape receptor/ the proposed development would cause little to no change to the landscape).

The geographical extent of landscape change will be recorded at various scales, including large area, medium area, small area or negligible area and may be expressed as how it relates to the site level, the site and immediate setting, a landscape type or character area, in accordance with the considerations set out in the table below.

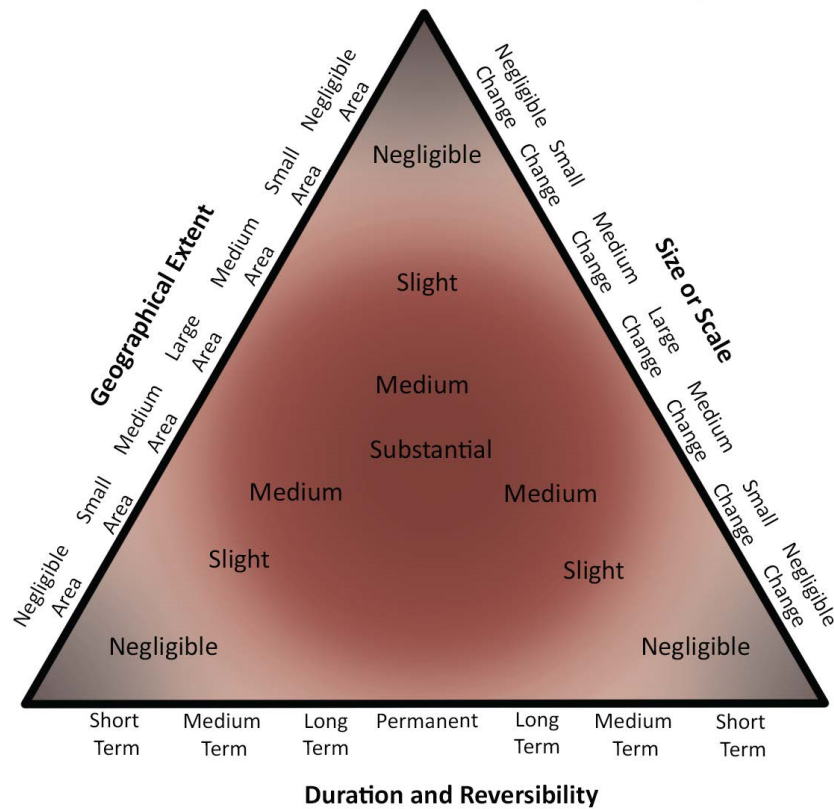
Geographical Extent of Landscape Change	Considerations
Large Area	The change may affect a large area and/or the majority of the landscape receptor under consideration (e.g. may influence several landscape types or character areas.)
Medium Area	The change may affect a medium area and/or approximately half of the landscape receptor under consideration (e.g. influence may extend beyond the site and its immediate setting and include a landscape type or character area).
Small Area	The change may affect a small area and/or extent of the landscape receptor under consideration (e.g. influence may be restricted to the site and its immediate setting only).

Negligible Area	The change will affect only a limited area and/or negligible extent of the landscape receptor under consideration (e.g. may be limited to the site level only).
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The duration and reversibility of landscape effect will be recorded at various scales, from short-term, medium-term, long-term and permanent, in accordance with the considerations set out in the table below.

Duration and Reversibility of Landscape Effects	Considerations
Permanent	Change that will last for over 25 years and is deemed permanent or irreversible.
Long term	Change that will endure for between 10 and 25. This may include change which is deemed reversible.
Medium term	Change that will last from 5 to 10 years. This may include change which is deemed reversible.
Short term	Change that will last from 0 to 5 years. This may include change which is deemed reversible.

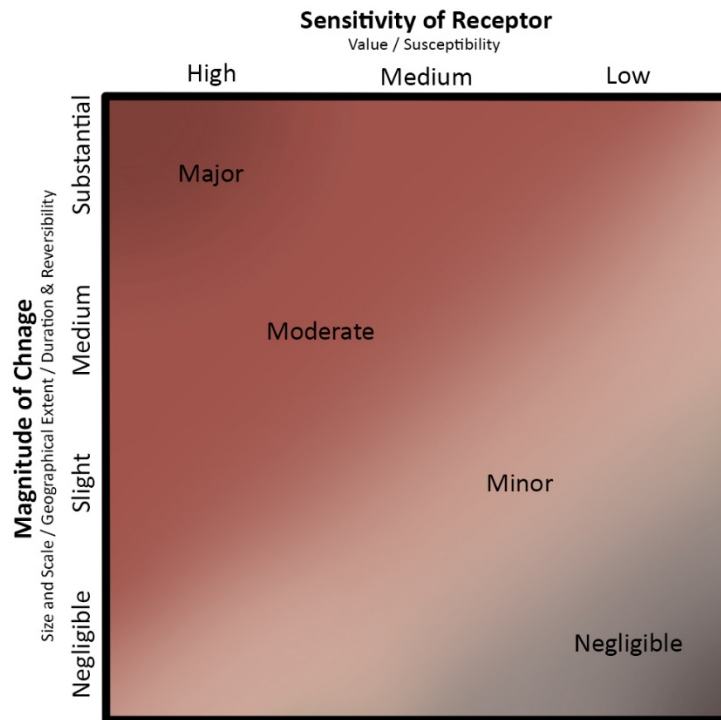
The overall magnitude of effect on landscape receptor will be judged by combining the considerations of size or scale, geographical extent of the area influenced and duration and reversibility. The table below provides an indication of how these judgements might be combined and should be reviewed in conjunction with the more detailed guidance set out in GLVIA 3.



Significance of Landscape Effects

The separate judgements about sensitivity of landscape receptors and the magnitude of landscape effects will then be combined to allow a final judgement to be made about whether each effect is significant.

The table below provides an indication of how these judgements might be combined and should be reviewed in conjunction with the more detailed guidance set out in GLVIA 3.



Major and major/ moderate effects are considered to be significant landscape effects. Those effects of moderate or lower category are generally not considered to be significant. A summary of considerations for each category of landscape effect is set out in the table below.

Significance of Landscape Effects	Considerations
Major	Large size or scale of change, over a large area, on a long-term or permanent basis, on landscape elements, aesthetic and perceptual aspects and/or distinctive character area that have a high susceptibility to the type of change proposed and are nationally or internationally valued.
Moderate	Medium size or scale of change, over a medium area, on a medium to long-term basis, on landscape elements, aesthetic and perceptual aspects and/or distinctive character area that have a medium susceptibility to the type of change proposed and are of national or local value.
Minor	Small size or scale of change, over a small area, of short duration, on landscape elements, aesthetic and perceptual aspects and/or distinctive character areas that have a low susceptibility to the type of change proposed and are of local or community value.
Negligible	Negligible size or scale of change over a negligible area and of short duration, on landscape elements, aesthetic and perceptual aspects and/or distinctive

	character areas that have a negligible susceptibility to the type of change proposed and are of community or low value.
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Visual Effects

Paragraph 6.1 of GLVIA3 describes how visual effects are concerned with *“assessing how the surroundings of individuals or groups of people may be specifically affected by changes in the content and character of views as a result of the change or loss of existing elements of the landscape and/or introduction of new elements”*.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

In relation to sensitivity, Paragraph 6.31 of GLVIA states that *“Each visual receptor, meaning the particular person or group of people likely to be affected at a specific viewpoint, should be assessed in terms of both their susceptibility to change in views and visual amenity and also the value attached to particular views.”*

The susceptibility to the type of change of each visual receptor will be judged as either high, medium or low, in accordance with the considerations set out in the table below.

Susceptibility to Type of Change Proposed	Considerations
High	The visual receptor (i.e. the person or group of people likely to be affected) has very limited or no ability to accommodate the proposed development without undue negative consequences for their occupation or activity. For example, residents at home, people engaged in outdoor recreation where their attention is likely to be focused on the landscape and on particular views, visitors to heritage assets or other attractions where views of the surroundings are an important part of the experience, communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents in the area and travellers along recognised scenic routes, where awareness of views is likely to be high)
Medium	The visual receptor (i.e. the person or group of people likely to be affected) has some ability to accommodate the proposed development without undue negative consequences for their occupation or activity. For example, people engaged in outdoor recreation where interest is focused on activity rather than primarily on views, visitors to heritage assets or other attractions where surroundings are not important to the experience and travellers on road, rail or other transport routes where the attention of drivers and passengers may be focused on the landscape and on particular views.

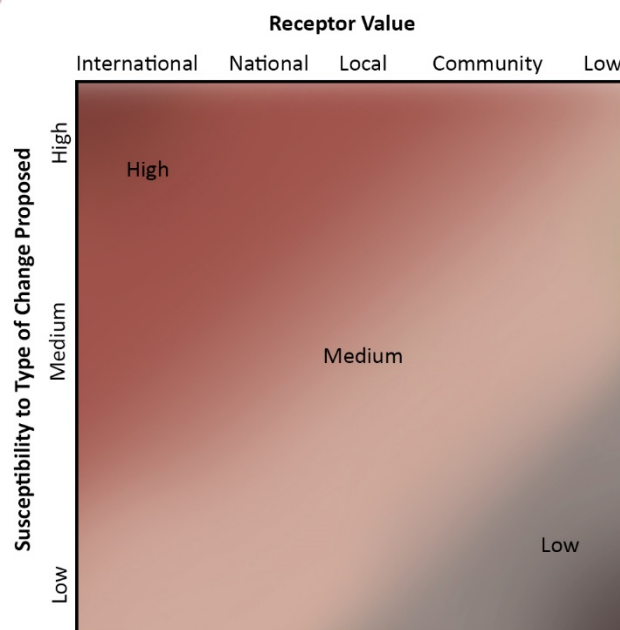
Low	The visual receptor (i.e. the person or group of people likely to be affected) has the ability to accommodate the proposed development without undue negative consequences for their occupation or activity. For example, people engaged in outdoor sport or recreation, which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views, people at their place of work whose attention may be focused on their work or activity, and where the setting is not important to quality of working life and travellers, where the view is incidental to the journey.
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The value attached to certain views and visual receptors will be judged as either international, national, local, community or as a low level, in accordance with the considerations set out in the table below. This may reflect recognition through landscape designations or heritage assets or indicators of the value attached to views by visitors, through appearance in guidebooks, tourist maps or provision of facilities.

Value	Considerations
International	The visual receptor (i.e. the person or group of people likely to be affected) is at a viewpoint or experiencing a view which is identified as being of international importance according to UNESCO criteria. This would include World Heritage Sites, candidate World Heritage Site. Consideration should be given to their settings especially where these contribute to the attributes of outstanding universal value for which such an area of landscape is valued.
National	The visual receptor (i.e. the person or group of people likely to be affected) is at a viewpoint or experiencing a view which is identified as being of national importance. This would include National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, National Scenic Areas (in Scotland) or equivalent areas. Gardens and designed landscapes included on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest as Grade I, II* or II or included in Historic Scotland's Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland. Consideration should be given to their settings especially where these contribute to the special qualities for which the landscape is valued. This may include popular tourist or visitor attractions, where the view forms a recognised part of the visitor experience and with provision of facilities for enjoyment. There may also be other cultural associations.
Local	The visual receptor (i.e. the person or group of people likely to be affected) is at a viewpoint or experiencing a view which is identified as being of value, either recognised at the local authority level by a local designation or considered to be of equivalent value using other criteria. This would include Special Landscape Areas, Areas of Great Landscape Value, etc. This may include local visitor attractions, where the view forms a recognised part of the visitor experience and with provision of facilities for enjoyment, such as

	seating or interpretation boards. There may also be other known cultural associations.
Community	The visual receptor (i.e. the person or group of people likely to be affected) is at a viewpoint or experiencing a view which is not nationally or locally designated, or judged to be of equivalent value, but nevertheless valued at a community level. This may include provision of facilities for enjoyment, such as seating or interpretation boards.
Low	The visual receptor (i.e. the person or group of people likely to be affected) is at a viewpoint or experiencing a view which is not designated or linked to a popular tourist attraction, has no demonstrable physical attributes that elevates its value and is in poor condition, or are degraded, or fundamentally altered by the presence of man-made structures (which are judged to be intrusive). No formal planning status or known cultural associations.

The overall sensitivity of each visual receptor assessed will be judged by combining the considerations of susceptibility to the type of change proposed and value. The table below provides an indication of how these judgements might be combined and should be reviewed in conjunction with the more detailed guidance set out in GLVIA 3.



Magnitude of Visual Effects

In relation to magnitude, Paragraph 6.38 of GLVIA states that *“Each of the visual effects identified needs to be evaluated in terms of its size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced, and its duration and reversibility.”*

The size or scale of visual effect will be recorded as large, medium, small, negligible, in accordance with the considerations as set out in the table below. No change may also be recorded, where appropriate.

Size or Scale of Visual Change	Considerations
Large	• large scale of change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of important features and complete changes in composition, including a high proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development • large degree of contrast of any new features or changes in the landscape (low degree of integration, non-characteristic or discordant) with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics in terms of form, scale and mass, line, height, colour and texture • full view of the proposed development (rather than partial or glimpsed) and therefore a dominant feature
Medium	• medium scale of change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features and clearly noticeable changes in composition, including a moderate proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development • medium degree of contrast of any new features or changes in the landscape (some degree of integration) with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics in terms of form, scale and mass, line, height, colour and texture • partial / intermittent view of the proposed development (rather than full or glimpsed) and therefore a noticeable feature
Small	• small scale of change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features and perceptible changes in composition, including a small proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development • small but perceptible degree of contrast of any new features or changes in the landscape (moderate degree of integration, involving features already present in the view) with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics in terms of form, scale and mass, line, height, colour and texture • partial / restricted view of the proposed development (rather than full or glimpsed) and therefore a perceptible feature

Negligible	• negligible scale of change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features and barely perceptible changes in composition, including a very limited proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development • negligible degree of contrast of any new features or changes in the landscape (high degree of integration, involving features already present in the view) with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics in terms of form, scale and mass, line, height, colour and texture • glimpsed view of the proposed development and therefore a barely perceptible feature
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The geographical extent of visual change will be recorded at various scales including, large area, medium area, small area or negligible area and may be expressed in terms of the angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor, distance away and extent of the area over which changes would be visible, in accordance with the considerations set out in the table below.

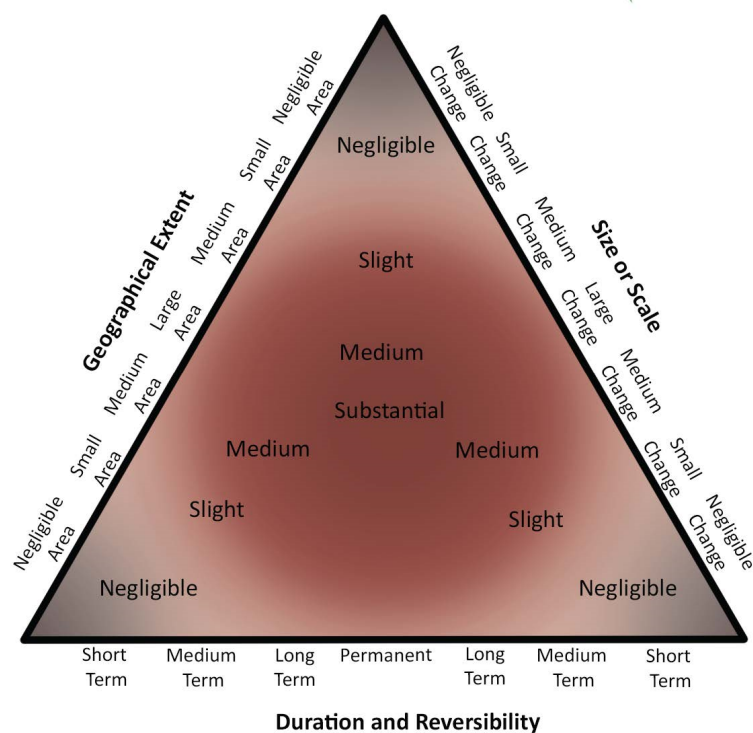
Geographical Extent of Visual Change	Considerations
Large Area	• large (wide) angle of view in relation to main activity of the receptor • short / close distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development (e.g. development would occupy the foreground) • large extent of the area over which the changes would be visible (the proposed development would be seen from many locations or from the majority, or a large proportion, of a linear route and/or by large numbers of viewers)
Medium Area	• medium (moderate) angle of view in relation to main activity of the receptor • medium distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development (e.g. development would occupy the middle-ground) • medium extent of the area over which the changes would be visible (the proposed development would be seen from several locations or from a moderate proportion, of a linear route and/or by moderate numbers of viewers)
Small Area	• small (narrow) angle of view in relation to main activity of the receptor

	• long distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development (e.g. development would occupy part of the background) • small extent of the area over which the changes would be visible (the proposed development would be seen from few locations or from limited proportion of a linear route and/or by small numbers of viewers)
Negligible Area	• negligible (very narrow) angle of view in relation to main activity of the receptor • considerable distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development (e.g. development would occupy part of the distant background) • negligible extent of the area over which the changes would be visible (the proposed development would be seen from few locations or from very limited proportion of a linear route and/or by very small numbers of viewers)

The duration and reversibility of visual effect will be recorded at various scales, from short-term, medium-term, long-term and permanent, in accordance with the considerations set out in the table below.

Duration and Reversibility of Visual Effects	Considerations
Permanent	Change that will last for over 25 years and is deemed permanent or irreversible.
Long term	Change that will endure for between 10 and 25. This may include change which is deemed reversible.
Medium term	Change that will last from 5 to 10 years. This may include change which is deemed reversible.
Short term	Change that will last from 0 to 5 years. This may include change which is deemed reversible.

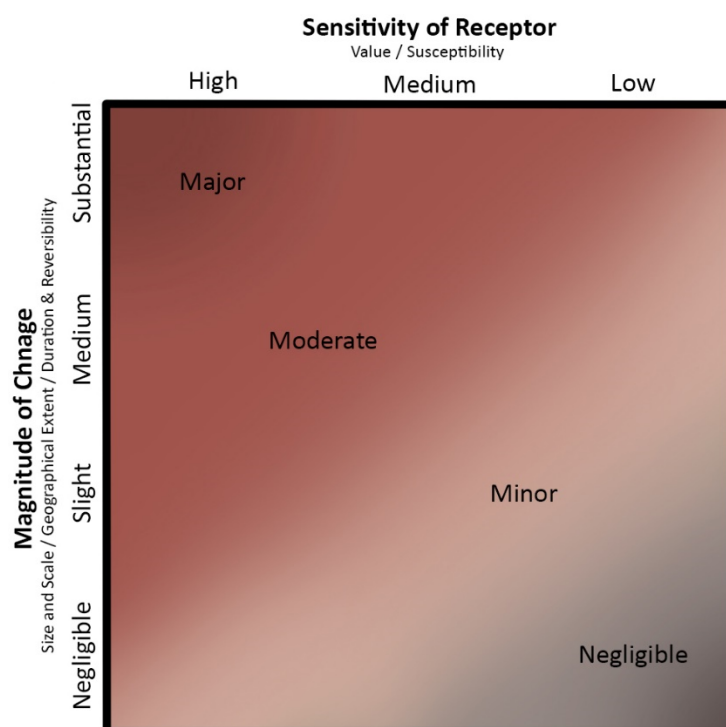
The overall magnitude of effect on visual receptor will be judged by combining the considerations of size or scale, geographical extent of the area influenced and duration and reversibility. The table below provides an indication of how these judgements might be combined and should be reviewed in conjunction with the more detailed guidance set out in GLVIA 3.



Significance of Visual Effects

The separate judgements about sensitivity of visual receptors and the magnitude of visual effects will then be combined to allow a final judgement to be made about whether each effect is significant.

The table below provides an indication of how these judgements might be combined and should be reviewed in conjunction with the more detailed guidance set out in GLVIA 3.



Major and major / moderate effects are considered to be significant visual effects. Those effects of moderate or lower category are generally considered to be not significant. A summary of considerations for each category of effect is set out in the table below.

Significance of Visual Effects	Considerations
Major	Large size or scale of change to views (introducing new, non-characteristic, discordant or intrusive elements), over a large geographical extent, on a long-term or permanent basis, on people who have a high susceptibility to the type of change proposed and are at recognised or important viewpoints (or scenic routes) which are nationally or internationally valued.
Moderate	Medium size or scale of change to views (introducing new elements which are similar to existing), over a medium geographical extent, on a medium to long-term basis, on people who have a medium susceptibility to the type of change proposed and are at recognised viewpoints of national or local value.
Minor	Small size or scale of change to views (involving features already present in views), over a small geographical extent, of short duration, on people who have a low susceptibility to the type of change proposed and are at viewpoints which are of local or community value.
Negligible	Negligible size or scale of change to views, over a negligible geographical extent and of short duration, on people who have a negligible susceptibility to

	the type of change proposed and are at viewpoints which are of community or low value.
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