

PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
CHAPEL LANE
WITHERLEY

Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment

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CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	LANDSCAPE RELATED POLICY	3
3	BASELINE ASSESSMENT	7
4	DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSALS	21
5	ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS	23
6	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	34

PLANS

ASPECT PLAN ASP1	SITE LOCATION PLAN
ASPECT PLAN ASP2	SITE AND SETTING PLAN
ASPECT PLAN ASP3	LANDSCAPE STRATEGY PLAN

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ASPECT LANDSCAPE & VISUAL IMPACT METHODOLOGY

APPENDIX 2 VISUAL ASSESSMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Aspect Landscape Planning Ltd has been appointed to undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) relating to the outline planning application seeking *“the erection of 5 dwellings with associated access, parking and landscaping”* on land to the south of Chapel Lane, Witherley in Leicestershire. The location and context of the application site is illustrated on **ASP1** Site Location Plan and **ASP2** Site and Setting Plan.
- 1.2. A detailed appraisal of the surrounding study area has been undertaken using Ordnance Survey data, historical map data, local policy and published character assessments. This has informed the on-site field analysis to identify key viewpoints, analyse the landscape character and visual environment of the local area and determine the extent and significance of any potential landscape and visual effects.
- 1.3. The assessment of effects has been derived from guidance provided within Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition (GLVIA3) published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment in April 2013. The methodology is contained within **Appendix 1** of this document.
- 1.4. The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) will take the following format:
 - Review of landscape related policy – national and local policy context reviewed with any designations identified (Section 2);
 - Baseline assessment – review of the existing landscape character and visual environment (Section 3);
 - Description of the proposals – introducing the proposed development and the associated landscape proposals and associated mitigation (Section 4);
 - Assessment of effects – using an established methodology based on the guidance of GLVIA3, the potential effects of the proposals upon the existing landscape character and visual environment will be assessed (Section 5);
 - Conclusions will be drawn (Section 6).
- 1.5. This assessment should be read alongside the other supporting material which accompanies this application.

- 1.6. A planning application on this site (reference 15/00441/FUL) dated 14 April 2015 was refused on 11 October 2017. A subsequent appeal (reference APP/K240/W/18/3197865) was dismissed on 16 November 2018. The dismissed scheme related to a proposal for 10 dwellings with associated access. There were 2 reasons for refusal, and they are set out below:
1. *"The proposal would result in unsuitable residential development in the designated countryside outside the settlement boundary of Witherley. The proposal would fail to complement or enhance the intrinsic value, beauty, undeveloped rural character of the countryside and the rural setting of the village. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy 12 of the Core Strategy (2009) and Policies DM1, DM4 and DM10 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD (2016).*
 2. *By virtue of the location, layout and scale, the proposed development would not complement the existing surrounding built form and would adversely impact on the rural character of the countryside and setting of the village. The proposed development would be contrary to Policies DM4 and DM10 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD (2016)."*
- 1.7. At the planning inquiry the Inspector stated that part of the main issue (paragraph 4 of the appeal decision) related to **the effect on the character and appearance of the countryside and the landscape**. He considers this within paragraphs 11 – 19 where he concludes in paragraph 19, *"... the proposed development would cause demonstrable harm to the character and appearance of the countryside and landscape. This would be contrary to policies DM4 and DM10 of the SADMPDPD which seek to protect the countryside and landscape character by safeguarding the countryside from development and requiring that development complements the character of the surrounding area."* In paragraph 31 he goes on, *"... I have also found that demonstrable harm would be caused to the character and appearance of the countryside and landscape through loss of a significant part of the appeal site, which is of moderate value to the landscape, to built development."*

2. LANDSCAPE RELATED POLICY

- 2.1. The application site lies on land within the jurisdiction of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- 2.2. The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions and outlines the Government's planning policies for England, setting out how these are expected to be applied. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF indicates those designated areas where development should be restricted, namely:
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
 - Green Belt;
 - Local Green Space;
 - Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
 - Heritage Coasts;
 - National Parks;
 - Designated Heritage Assets; and
 - Areas at Risk of Flooding or Coastal Erosion
- 2.3. The site is not washed over by any of the above statutory designations. It is also not washed over by any local landscape designations.
- 2.4. Paragraph 174 requires planning policies and decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by fulfilling criteria that includes amongst others:
- a) *protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan); and*
 - b) *recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.*

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) 2019

- 2.5. Those categories within the NPPG that are of relevance to landscape and visual matters in relation to this site are set out below.

National Design Guide

- 2.6. The importance of design is a key focus within the guide as is the local and wider context and character of the site.

Green Infrastructure

- 2.7. The NPPG highlights the multifaceted benefits delivered through Green Infrastructure (GI) and recognises how it can be used to reinforce and enhance local landscape character and contribute to a sense of place.

Landscape

- 2.8. Finally, the NPPG refers to the NPPF and the recognition of the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the provision of strategic policies to provide the conservation and enhancement of landscapes. Adverse landscape impacts are to be avoided and mitigation measures employed where necessary.

Local Planning Policy

- 2.9. The Hinkley and Bosworth Local Plan is made up of following documents that are relevant here, namely the Core Strategy adopted December 2009 (CS) and the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD adopted July 2016 (SADMP).
- 2.10. Policies that are relevant to this site and LVIA and referred to in the Reasons for Refusal (RfR) are as follows – DM4 and D10 and Aspect have highlighted those requirements relevant to landscape and visual matters that are dealt with in this LVIA shown in **bold** below.

SADMP Policy DM4 Safeguarding the Countryside and Settlement Separation

- 2.11. This policy seeks to protect the intrinsic value, beauty, open character, and landscape character from unsustainable development. It will be considered sustainable where:

- a) It is for outdoor sport or recreation purposes.
- b) It relates to a change of use.
- c) It contributes to economic growth.
- d) It relates to renewable energy.
- e) It relates to rural worker provision.

And:

- i. **it does not have a significant adverse effect on the intrinsic value, beauty, open character, and landscape character of the countryside;**
- ii. it does not undermine the physical and perceived separation and open character between settlements;
- iii. it does not create or exacerbate ribbon development;
- iv. if within a Green Wedge, it protects its role and function in line with Core Strategy policies 6 and 9; and
- v. if within the National Forest, it contributes to the delivery of the National Forest Strategy in line with Core Strategy policy 21.

SADMP DM10 Development and Design

2.12. Development will be permitted if the following requirements are met:

- a) It would not have a significant adverse effect on the privacy and amenity of nearby residents and occupiers of adjacent buildings, relating to lighting, air quality, noise, vibration, and visual intrusion;
- b) The amenity of occupiers of the proposed development would not be adversely affected by activities in the vicinity of the site;
- c) **It complements or enhances the character of the surrounding area with regard to scale, layout, density, mass, design, materials, and architectural features;**
- d) The use and application of building materials respects the materials of existing, adjoining/neighbouring buildings and the local area generally;
- e) **It incorporates a high standard of landscaping where this would add to the quality of the design and siting;**
- f) It maximises opportunities for the conservation of energy and resources through design, layout, orientation, and construction in line with Core Strategy policy 24;
- g) Where parking is to be provided charging points for electric or low emission vehicles are included where feasible;

- h) An appropriate Sustainable Drainage Scheme is submitted to and approved by the relevant Authority. Schemes should incorporate wildlife areas, ponds, swales and permeable paving where appropriate;
- i) It maximises natural surveillance and incorporates the principles of Secured by Design and has considered the incorporation of fire safety measures.

2.13. Innovative, outstanding design may be considered favourably even if conflict with some of the criteria results.

2.14. The layout that is now submitted addresses relevant planning policy as shown to be accommodated within this full planning application. Refer to all other documentation forming the planning application submission.

3 BASELINE ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 The application site is located on the eastern edge of the settlement of Witherley and to the south of Chapel Lane. Witherley is a small hamlet that lies on the south western edge of Leicestershire close to the Warwickshire town of Atherstone and separated by the River Anker and the A5 trunk road.
- 3.2 The location and setting of the application site is illustrated on **ASP1** Site Location Plan and **ASP2** Site and Setting Plan.
- 3.3 The site lies within a space between the Parish Rooms and Chapelfield Lodge occupied by dilapidated built form, hard standing and part of a pasture field. Further eastwards along Chapel Lane lies Drayton Barn Farm complex and Witherley Boarding Kennels and Cattery. The site lies within a wider landholding that is the rough pasture field.
- 3.4 The site has a mixed character that comprises:
- Stables of poor quality.
 - Portal barns of poor quality.
 - Areas of hard standing of poor quality.
 - Pastoral/scrub land in use.
 - Invaded scrub and other unmanaged trees, shrubs and overgrown, unkempt vegetation of poor quality around derelict buildings on Chapel Lane.
 - An unkempt area surrounding the Parish Rooms that indent into the site on Chapel Lane of poor quality.
 - Incomplete, absent or inappropriate enclosure along Chapel Lane of poor quality.
- 3.5 Other detracting elements that add to the appearance of dereliction and degradation in particular along Chapel Lane, include the presence of telegraph poles and overhead cables, vacant and unused derelict spaces, poor edge interface with Chapel Lane, lack of coherent land use.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

- 3.6 A PRoW passes through the wider land holding of the applicant from a location between the Parish Rooms and 38 Chapel Lane, roughly following the western

boundary to a gate in the south western corner of the site. This passes across and within open arable fields to Fenny Drayton and appears to be poorly used. A link back Kennel Lane can be taken near the end of Chapel Lane three fields from the site, through some fields of pasture. PRoW routes are illustrated on plans (**ASP1 & 2**).

Topography

- 3.7 The localised topography around the settlement of Witherley is broadly flat between the 70m and 75m contours. The River Anker drains the land as it wraps around the settlement edge to the immediate west. The southern part of the redline area has been identified as an area liable to flooding (refer to the planning submission package for details).
- 3.8 The area identified for development within this proposal lies outside of flooding risk.

National Landscape Character

- 3.9 Natural England have produced a countrywide landscape character assessment resulting in the identification of National Character Areas (NCA's). The site lies within **NCA 72 Mease/Sence Lowlands**. This is an extensive geographic area stretching from Burton on Trent to the north as far as Nuneaton and Bedworth to the south and across parts of 4 counties. A generally low-lying arable lowland landscape centred around the rivers, Mease, Sence and Anker. Tranquillity is noted as declining, mainly as the result of increased traffic on main roads. The settlement of Witherley joins the A5 and is also close to the settlements of Atherstone and Mancetter at the southern edge of the NCA. The NCA states that the *“features in the landscape that are particularly important in conveying a sense of tranquillity are the prominent streams and rivers and the associated pastoral character of stream sides on steeper slopes and around villages.”*
- 3.10 The site represents a very small component within the large geographic area where any relevance to the site therefore is contextual only.

District Landscape Character

Hinckley and Bosworth Landscape Character Assessment – LUC (2017)

- 3.11 GLVIA3 guides us to consider the relevant published assessments and in this case the 2017 LUC document provides the most recent assessment that follows on from an earlier study in 2006.
- 3.12 The borough has been divided into 10 Landscape Character Areas (LCA) and the site is placed within **LCA G: Sence Lowlands**.
- 3.13 Witherley lies on the LCA border with North Warwickshire as it joins the A5 and the urban settlement of Mancetter across the A5. Urban development follows the A5 to Atherstone and beyond, the setting of Witherley to the west being more urban and developed in character than that of the LCA G Sence Lowlands.
- 3.14 The LCA is a large geographic area stretching close to Twycross in the north, close to Market Harborough in the east, close to Higham on the Hill to the south and next to Atherstone and Mancetter to the west. This LCA is of some 10km north to south and approximately 10km west to east.

This LUC document represents a general assessment offering a broad-brush approach without a focus on detail. It is recommended in GLVIA3 that detailed local studies can assist in providing a site specific level of detail.

- 3.15 This LUC broad-brush approach means that judgements made on individual areas will not necessarily focus on detail. For example, a character area may have pockets that are in better or worse condition, or higher or lower sensitivity. Judgements are therefore a summary of the overall picture.
- 3.16 Bearing in mind the large scale of the LCA, the relevance of the site and its setting to the key characteristics are highlighted by Aspect in **bold**.
- 3.17 Key Characteristics LCA G: Sence Lowlands.
- 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 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.

3.18 Water and the flat valleys associated with the tributaries and River Sence together with surface water (ditches, streams, ponds etc) are features of the landscape where seasonal waterlogging can occur.

3.19 Land use is mostly agriculture and **woodland is sparse, generally confined to copses and spinneys on ridges and occasional groups of trees on stream sides. Where woodlands occur, they are deciduous and hedgerow trees are mainly oak and ash.** (*Aspect emphasis in response to Council and appeal Inspector observations that tree groups are not representative in the LCA*). The presence of the A5 and settlements detract from any potential dark skies. Roads are typically rural with wide verges and ditches. Views can be wide and open across farmland where church spires (such as St Peter's Church in Witherley for example) are local landmarks.

3.20 Settlement pattern includes scattered farmsteads and linear villages. With a reference to Witherley in the assessment, where it is noted that it has "*undergone expansion.*"

3.21 In terms of natural influences, field ponds, rivers, streams, riparian trees and vegetation alongside them represent valuable habitats.

3.22 Key Sensitivities and Values of LCA G: Sence Lowlands are set out below with those of relevance to the site highlighted by Aspect in **bold**.

- 1) Rural character with a lack of significant intrusions or light pollution resulting in a sense of remoteness and tranquillity.

- 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 Mandeussedum, as well as industrial heritage associated with the Canal and numerous historic buildings.

3.23 Landscape Strategies LCA G: Sence Lowlands are set out below with those of relevance to the site highlighted by Aspect in **bold**.

- 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.
- 2) **Conserve the open rural views including views to church spires and towers in their rural setting.**
- 3) **Retain areas of tranquillity and rural character, ensuring that development in such areas respects the rural context.**
- 4) Promote recreational and cultural opportunities associated with the battlefield.
- 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.

- 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.**
- 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.

3.24 In paragraph 2.23, GLVIA3 endorses the importance of professional judgement for LVIA's. Paragraph 5.15 explains the need to review and interpret published Landscape Character Assessments and in paragraph 5.16 discusses the likelihood to undertake specific and more detailed surveys of the site, immediate setting and surroundings to provide the opportunity to analyse conformity or difference to published assessments and to look closely at other characteristics that may be important to considering the effects of the proposal.

Aspect Landscape Character Assessment

3.25 As evidenced above, the National assessment provides context, in terms of a broad-brush approach and the District assessment while a finer scale does not necessarily reflect the particular qualities of the application site itself and its immediate setting. As such Aspect has undertaken a more localised landscape character assessment of the application site on the edge of Witherley and the immediate surrounding landscape.

3.26 **The site setting character:** The site lies between residential built development and the Witherley Parish Rooms on an edge of settlement location accessed via Chapel Lane.

3.27 To the north of Chapel Lane lies an open agricultural landscape enclosed by field hedgerows, some with trees. Atterton Lane and Chapel Lane are single track roads, Atterton Lane supporting wider grass verges and tree lined hedgerows. The maturity of the hedgerows on Atterton Lane in combination with tree density filter visibility across the generally flat landscape when approaching Witherley from the north. This filtering is heightened further by the presence of numerous trees either in hedgerows or as lone specimens in the wider landscape where hedgerows have been removed and trees left. The presence of built form around Kennel Farm and in particular the large-scale agricultural units screen the site until past them when the settlement of

Witherley becomes apparent. The site lies within this settled context between existing built form.

- 3.28 To the west and east, the site lies within a “mixed use parcel” of land that comprises more of a mosaic of smaller components unlike the characteristics of the wider context. This parcel is defined by Chapel Lane to the north, Kennel Lane to the west, the domestic property of Chapel Lodge and garden boundary to the east and a continuous hedgerow between Kennel Lane and Chapel Lodge to the south. The character of this enclosed parcel is different in scale, composition, land uses, and enclosing elements compared to the wider open agricultural character of the landscape to the south and east of Witherley.
- 3.29 The “mixed use parcel” includes residential development, garden spaces, the Parish Room, paddocks, the dilapidated built form of the site and the pasture field that includes the site itself. Boundaries include a mix of fencing including domestic elements and non-native hedging of differing condition and in some cases absent. It has very much an urban fringe character.
- 3.30 The character of the landscape surrounding Witherley to the north of Chapel Lane, to the east of Chapel Lodge and to the south of the “mixed use parcel” reflects the characteristics of LCA G: Sence Lowlands more closely than that of the “mixed use parcel” that is more urban fringe.
- 3.31 **The site character.** Paragraphs 3.4 and 3.5 describe the location of the proposed development which depicts an unmanaged and neglected area of poor quality comprising; barns and stables of poor quality, areas of hard standing, areas of invaded scrub and poor-quality vegetation and generally lacking intact and appropriate enclosing elements. The landscape parcel of the site is chaotic and lacks coherence as a result.
- 3.32 The area to be developed occupies the neglected landscape (in general,) where further southwards it reverts to a small pasture field. There is no definition on the ground of the red line, this will be introduced. This wider area slopes gradually southwards from Chapel Lane, the site area itself remains relatively flat.
- 3.33 From west to east along Chapel Lane built form exists from the bungalow of 38 Chapel Lane to Chapel Lodge. Significantly, between these points lie the neglected elements of the site and only a short section (46m approximately) of the site,

between the derelict barns and the 10m tall Cypress Hedge at Chapel Lodge, is an area of the large pasture field.

- 3.34 The PRoW crosses the wider landholding (refer to **ASP1** and **ASP2**) from beside the Parish Room and 38 Chapel Lane. The Parish Rooms indent into the site from this point and while the PRoW passes through the wider pasture field parcel, the urban fringe elements such as the small paddocks, small, fenced areas, sheds and the rears of properties all influence the experience when moving through. This experience is more urban fringe rather than open countryside.

Enclosing elements are as follows:

- 3.35 **The Eastern boundary** abuts the residential curtilage of Chapelfield Lodge. It comprises a 10m+ mature evergreen Cypress hedge on the boundary. This is non-native and domestic in character and does not represent a traditional agricultural hedgerow in the countryside, rather it conveys a residential element at this location.
- 3.36 It is noted that the proposed scheme sits well within the full screening capacity of the evergreen tree belt.
- 3.37 It is also relevant to note that the eastern boundary of Chapelfield Lodge, 37m further to the east, comprises a complete hedgerow arrangement which encloses a garden building and garden trees that sit within this domestic edge to Witherley.
- 3.38 The site lies between 38 Chapel Lane, the Parish Rooms and Chapelfield Lodge. It does not abut open countryside on the eastern boundary.
- 3.39 **The Western boundary** is formed by a mix of enclosing elements comprising domestic closeboard 1.8m high fencing along the garden boundary of 38 Chapel Lane; a field gate to a small, grassed area with shed enclosed by wire fencing; a section of dilapidated post and wire fence to another grassed area with a number of low shed buildings beyond the site boundary that leads to a section of treed hedgerow in the southwestern corner of the pasture field. A traditional native hedgerow boundary is absent.
- 3.40 It is noted that the land to the west of the blueline boundary conveys an urban fringe use, abutting residential properties off Kennel Lane and rear gardens of Chapel Lane.

- 3.41 It does not abut open countryside on the western boundary.
- 3.42 The Parish Rooms indent into the site, separated by hardstandings and part of a hedgerow along its western and eastern boundaries.
- 3.43 **The Northern boundary** abuts Chapel Lane. Chapel Lane is single track with a mature and well-maintained hedgerow on its northern side. The southern side of Chapel Lane that is the site boundary has no complete definition. It varies from being undefined around the Parish Rooms; open hard standing; a metal field gate; post and wire, post and rail dilapidated fencing and more metal gates; side of dilapidated stables; and section of native hedgerow as far as Chapelfield Lodge. This abuts a new 2m high brick wall property boundary of Chapelfield Lodge.
- 3.44 It is noted that dwellings and other built forms are located along the southern side of Chapel Lane and that boundary treatment is incomplete and varied in type and condition.
- 3.45 **Southern boundary** of the redline parcel is not demarcated. It is to be informed by the extent of the flood zone and will be created by the introduction of a native hedgerow buffer with trees.
- 3.46 A hedgerow defines the more southerly blue line boundary that is gappy in places, mature in others but also abutting open countryside to the south.
- 3.47 The site area lacks any clear landscape pattern, its condition and composition does not reflect its published LCA. It is an unremarkable landscape that is not elevated above the ordinary.
- 3.48 In summary, the prevailing urban fringe context is demonstrated as influencing the character of the site and remains a significant presence and influence within the site's immediate setting. There is a distinct lack of rural character as a result of the urban fringe influences.
- 3.49 Sensitivity. In order to assess the effects on the landscape resource this LVIA is guided by GLVIA3 which provides a number of definitions for landscape susceptibility, landscape value and finally landscape sensitivity, as follows:

- **Landscape Susceptibility:** *“the ability of a defined landscape to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue negative consequences;”*
- **Landscape Value:** *“the relative value that is attached to different landscape by society. A landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons”; and*
- **Landscape Sensitivity:** *“a term applied to specific receptors, combining judgements of the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific type of change or development proposed and the value related to that receptor.”*

3.50 In terms of landscape sensitivity, there are a number of factors that both influence and affect the value of the landscape character of the site and its setting, and their susceptibility to change. The sensitivity of a particular landscape in relation to new development can be categorised as high, medium, low or negligible. This takes into account the susceptibility of the receptor to the type of development proposed and the value attached to different landscapes by society.

Landscape Susceptibility (high, medium, low, none)

3.51 In terms of the susceptibility of the landscape resource to accommodate change of the type proposed, it is considered that the proximity of the settlement of Witherley to the site, along Chapel Lane and Kennel Lane and also the presence of the Parish Rooms that indent into the site itself and the effect of the built form and domestic curtilage of Chapelfield Lodge, contributes to its setting, and reduces the susceptibility of the site to change resulting from residential development. It is therefore considered that the landscape character of the site has capacity to accommodate sensitively designed residential development. The susceptibility of the landscape resource to change of the type proposed is considered to be **low**.

Landscape Value (high, medium, low, none)

3.52 GLVIA 3 sets out at Box 5.1 a range of factors that can help in the identification of valued landscapes. These factors include:

- Landscape quality (condition);
- Scenic quality;
- Rarity;
- Representativeness;

- Conservation Interests;
- Recreation Value;
- Perceptual aspects; and
- Associations.

3.53 Table 1 below seeks to assess the value of the site based on the Box 5.1 criteria.

Table 1: Assessment of Landscape Value of the Site

Criteria	Assessment of Value
Landscape quality (condition)	Low – The site includes derelict and dilapidated buildings and surface areas with invading scrub and poor boundary treatments.
Scenic quality	Low – The lack of boundary continuity and appropriateness combined with the derelict appearance of the site along Chapel Lane represents a detracting composition in the landscape.
Rarity	Low – There are no landscape components within the site that are considered to be rare. All other features and attributes can be replaced within a reasonable timescale.
Representativeness	Low – There are very few landscape features that are considered to be representative examples of the localised character and neither the site nor its edge of settlement setting is considered to be highly distinctive or representative of the other published key characteristics.
Conservation Interests	Low – Not noted.
Recreation Value	Medium – A PRoW passes through the site.
Perceptual aspects	Low – There is no real perception of wildness or tranquillity given its location on the edge of Witherley, the indentation of the Parish Rooms and proximity to Chapelfield Lodge.
Associations	None – There are no known literary or historic associations with the site.

3.54 In terms of value, the landscape in which the site is immediately set is not formally a landscape value designation. Furthermore, there are no known historic or literary associations with the site, and it is influenced by its urban fringe context. The site does not include any landscape features of particular note or distinctiveness.

3.55 Aspect concludes that the landscape value of the site and its immediate setting is therefore **low**.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 3.56 The site is not remarkable, nor does it include any features which elevate it above ordinary landscape. The site is not considered to represent a “valued landscape” in relation to the NPPF. When both low value and low susceptibility of the landscape resource are considered together, it is concluded that the application site would typically be of **low** landscape sensitivity.
- 3.57 The site:
- lacks a strong landscape pattern and character.
 - has only a few characteristic features within its immediate setting that are noted in district character assessments – they include the flat to gently rolling landform, presence of ditches etc, a network of rural roads and lanes, and church towers/spires that are prominent landmarks.
 - has no cultural and historic associations.
 - comprises features and attributes which could easily be replaced within a reasonable timescale.
- 3.58 Clearly, and in line with guidance set out in GLVIA3, Aspect have undertaken a site-specific assessment which conveys the character of the site and its setting in more detail and with greater accuracy than that provided within LCA G: Sence Lowlands.
- 3.59 Aspect consider that the site area comprises a discordant collection of features most of which are in a state of dereliction or decline. The adjacent built form of dwellings, sheds, and enclosing elements align more with domestic dwellings than with the countryside. Likewise, the landuses of dwellings, domestic paddocks, garden spaces and the Parish Rooms, in combination with the neglected use on most of the site, convey a site and setting that is more urban fringe than countryside in character as asserted by the Council and the appeal Inspector.
- 3.60 Clearly the site has scope for improvement over the baseline situation.

Visual Baseline Assessment

- 3.61 The viewpoints demonstrate the visibility of the site within the localised and wider setting. The views are from publicly accessible viewpoints and although are not exhaustive, are considered to provide a fair representation of the visual environment

within which the site is set. The visual analysis seeks to identify the views that will, potentially, experience the greatest degree of change as a result of the proposals.

- 3.62 The visual assessment is included within **Appendix 2** and the baseline studies have fully considered the various factors required, as detailed in Section 6 of GLVIA3, and the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19.
- 3.63 The photographs were taken on 21 July 2021 (refer to photosheets in **Appendix 2**). The photographs were taken by a Chartered Landscape Architect using a 35mm equivalent digital SLR camera at a 50mm focal length in line with LI Technical Guidance Note 06/19. The weather was bright and with good visibility. Taken during the summer, the leaves of deciduous trees remain in full leaf.
- 3.64 Due to the combination of trees and other vegetation with built form in the locale, the site enjoys a relatively confined visual envelope where the containment of the site is such that views into and out from the site are limited and mostly close to the site itself where they are filtered. The full assessment of effects upon the visual environment and each viewpoint is detailed in section 5 of this report and the table below provides a summary of the viewpoint assessment.
- 3.65 Table 2 below identifies the locations of the identified viewpoints, together with the key receptors and considered sensitivity.

Table 2: Baseline Visual Assessment

Viewpoint	Location	Distance and Direction from Application Site Boundary	Receptors	Sensitivity
1	Corner of Chapel Lane and Atterton Lane	40m west	Motorists	Medium
2	Atterton Lane	140m north	Motorists	Medium
3	Western site boundary PRoW	0m	PRoW users	High
4	<i>Western site boundary (context only)</i>	<i>0m looking west out of site</i>	N/A	N/A
5	PRoW	82m south	PRoW users	High
6	PRoW	87m south	PRoW users	High
7	Chapel Lane	35m east	Motorists	Medium
8	Chapel Lane	190m east	Motorists	Medium
9	PRoW	383m south	PRoW users	High
10	Junction of Kennel Lane and St Peter's Avenue	210m west	Pedestrians	Medium
11	Junction with A5 and Kennel Lane	622 south	Motorists	Medium

12	Car Park to closed Pub	652m south	Motorists	Medium
13	PRoW	500m northwest	PRoW users	High
14	Atterton Lane	76924m north	Motorists	Medium
15	PRoW off Atterton Lane	2.2km east	PRoW users	High
16	PRoW Fenny Drayton	2.0km east	PRoW users	High
17	Drayton Lane	545m northeast	Motorists	Medium

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSALS

- 4.1 Full details of the proposal are provided within the supporting material which accompanies this outline application, including the Site Plan.
- 4.2 Following on from the dismissed scheme, this full planning proposal has revisited the layout with iterative collaboration from the various technical disciplines and has resulted in this proposal. A landscape strategy plan **ASP3** has been prepared by Aspect to illustrate how the proposal fits within the receiving landscape, delivers an improvement over the baseline situation and responds to concerns raised by the Council. The number of dwellings is now reduced to 5, a much smaller scheme that follows the linear pattern along Chapel Lane.
- 4.3 Landscape mitigation is shown within the red line area with landscape and biodiversity enhancements shown within the pasture field, the blue line area.
- 4.4 Overall, the Landscape Strategy delivers a number of multi-functional benefits including mitigation and enhancement measures and they are outlined below:
- Introduction of a native species hedgerow with small front garden trees along the frontage with Chapel Lane. This provides a coherent and appropriate boundary that replaces the mixture of derelict buildings, fencing, unkept vegetation. The hedgerow reflects the LCA aspirations and assists bio-diversity values.
 - At the edge of the floodzone a native hedgerow buffer with native trees that are supplemented with back garden native fruit and nut trees will be introduced to demarcate the southern site boundary, provide a green corridor for bio-diversity interest and to soften views of built form from the PRow.
 - The PRow corridor that currently passes through the pasture field could be enhanced with wild flowers and additional native planting located outside the flood zone.
 - The boundaries of the blueline pasture field could be enhanced through the introduction of wildflower species to provide an improved typology adjacent to the hedgerows.
 - The hedgerow boundaries of the blueline pasture field could be gapped up and enhanced with native hedgerow and tree species to improve

connectivity, bio-diversity value, to respond to LCA aspirations regarding hedgerows.

- A dense native privacy screen of evergreen and deciduous native planting combined with a timber acoustic fence will provide noise mitigation in response to fears raised by the Council and Inspector.

- 4.5 This illustrates that the baseline situation in both red and blue lined areas could be enlivened to benefit landscape character, to see increased bio-diversity value and to enrich the visual situation. This shows that the landscape setting has been appropriately considered.
- 4.6 The enhancement measures offer the opportunity to deliver more benefits in terms of landscape and bio-diversity over the baseline situation while the mitigation proposals within the red line ensure that the proposals are successfully integrated without harm.
- 4.7 The proposals incorporate a robust landscape strategy that will provide structure to the proposed residential development and tie in with the surrounding existing vegetation along within the site's immediate context and wider Green Infrastructure. This will not only contribute to the sustainability of the site, but also assist in creating a high-quality development which sits well within its landscaped context. The proposed soft landscape elements will assist in breaking up and softening the perceived built environment.

5. ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS

- 5.1 To assess the nature of the change as a result of the proposals, it is appropriate to appraise the impact of the proposed development upon the existing landscape character and visual environment within which the site is situated.
- 5.2 In order to assess the effect of a development on the receiving environment, it is important to understand the quality and sensitivity of the landscape, the sensitivity of visual receptors, and the magnitude of change.
- 5.3 The assessment of effects has been derived from guidance provided within GLVIA3. The methodology is contained within **Appendix 1** of this document.

Effect upon Landscape Character

National Landscape Character Area

- 5.4 It is considered that the proposals can be integrated without significant harm to the character or qualities of the national character area given this provides context only at this scale. **No adverse effect** would arise.

Borough Landscape Character

5.5 Key Characteristics LCA G: Sence Lowlands.

- 5.6 The key characteristics of the LCA are at a broader scale than the site specific undertaken by Aspect. For consistency they are set out below with commentary on effects arising where they are relevant to the site and setting (relevant characteristics in **bold**).
- **Flat to gently rolling lowland vale landscape with rounded clay ridges and shallow valleys giving rise to extensive and open views.** There would be no change occurring to the landform characteristic. **No effect.**
 - **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. There would be no change occurring to the water features. **No effect**
 - **Well-ordered agricultural landscape with a regular pattern of rectilinear fields of typical Parliamentary enclosure lined by low hedgerows with mature**

hedgerow trees. The site lies within part of a field where hedgerow boundaries will be strengthened, and absent hedgerows introduced. This will have a **beneficial effect for the long term**.

- **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. The loss of hedgerow enclosure along Chapel Lane in the site area (northern boundary) and the poor condition of enclosing derelict buildings, fences, gates etc on the site boundary is noted. The introduction of native hedgerows to property frontages will have a **beneficial effect in the long term**.
- *A rural tranquil character*. The edge of settlement location and fronting Chapel Lane with road activity and Parish Rooms is not regarded to be tranquil in character regarding the site. **No effect**.
- **Spired and towered churches form prominent landmarks in the open landscape**. Views of the church spire are noted in numerous views around the settlement. The proposal will not affect the many views afforded. **No effect**.
- *A rural dispersed settlement pattern of linear villages, scattered farmsteads and barns*. No change to the linear settlement pattern will occur. **No effect**.
- *Small villages with strong sense of place and local vernacular of red brick*. **No effect**.
- *Bosworth Battlefield has strong heritage associations*. **No effect**.
- *Water and the flat valleys associated with the tributaries and River Sence together with surface water (ditches, streams, ponds etc) are features of the landscape where seasonal waterlogging can occur*. Flooding has been taken into account within the scheme proposal. **No effect**.

5.7 Settlement pattern includes scattered farmsteads and linear villages. With a reference to Witherley in the assessment, where it is noted that it has “*undergone expansion*.” The proposal relates to only 5 dwellings, small in scale.

5.8 Landscape Strategies LCA G: Sence Lowlands have been taken into account where relevant within the proposal as set out below.

- **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. The proposal includes hedgerow replenishment, hedgerow introduction and replacement of mixed enclosures

with native hedgerows and hedgerow trees within the red line. In addition a number of enhancement measures are identified. **This accords.**

- ***Conserve the open rural views including views to church spires and towers in their rural setting.*** Views to the church spire are many and varied and will remain. **This accords.**
- ***Retain areas of tranquillity and rural character, ensuring that development in such areas respects the rural context.*** Landscape mitigation includes native species boundary improvements and proposals that deliver benefits over the baseline situation to ensure a good landscape fit with the receiving landscape is achieved. In addition, the land edged blue includes a field that could be enhanced for landscape, visual amenity, and bio-diversity advantage. **This accords.**
- *Promote recreational and cultural opportunities associated with the battlefield. N/A.*
- *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. N/A.*
- ***Respect and enhance the strong character of the villages, ensuring new development complements existing context with regards to scale, form, materials, and boundary features.*** The proposed scheme is small scale, reinstates and improves native boundary planting, respects the linear settlement pattern and is sensitively designed. **This accords.**
- ***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. The PRoW corridor is enhanced with wild flower meadow species and additional hedgerow and tree planting on boundaries to improve visual amenity and experience for users. This accords.***

- 5.9 As set out above, the proposals would not give rise to any significant adverse effects upon the key characteristics and sensitivities of the LCA. Inevitably development on any green field site changes the land use. However, the various key strategies for the LCA have been identified and incorporated into the scheme to deliver appropriate responses. Given the enhanced boundary treatments, the location between built form on Chapel Lane and the edge of settlement location, the retention of the key relevant features such as, hedgerows and flat landform, it is considered by Aspect that a “low” sensitivity combined with a “low” magnitude of

change would result in a **Minor Adverse** effect. This is not considered to be significant.

- 5.10 The proposals would be well contained and would lie along Chapel Lane within the context of existing residential and other development. The site's immediate setting is already influenced by residential elements in both directions along Chapel Lane. It is considered that the LCA has the capacity to accommodate the relatively small-scale residential development, of the type proposed.

Localised Landscape Character – Site and Setting

- 5.11 In terms of the effect of the proposals upon the landscape of the site and its immediate setting, it is acknowledged that the proposals would result in the removal of the unused area, the dilapidated barns and stables, the mixed enclosing elements and invaded scrub in addition to a small area of pasture field. The mixed character would therefore change. That change would see the replacement of the chaotic and unattractive elements with a well-designed small scale residential line of 5 dwellings that dovetail between existing on Chapel Lane. Landscape and visual amenity would benefit from the change as a result. New native hedgerows, native trees and wildflowers would be introduced to the site. In addition there is potential for the blueline area to be enhanced and strengthened. Aspect considered this to be "low/negligible" sensitivity combined with a "low" magnitude of change resulting in a **Minor/Negligible adverse effect**. This is not considered to be significant and the effect of the 5 new dwellings would be localised.
- 5.12 Proposals will retain the characteristic flat landform, protect and enhance the key boundary treescape and hedgerows, with development set back from them by green space (eastern boundary) by garden spaces (northern and southern boundaries). The features will be integrated within a comprehensive landscape framework that reconnects features site wide and which will provide a mature structure within which to integrate new development sensitively. These are some of the key features of the LCA and the proposals in this instance are considered to be **beneficial**.
- 5.13 The proposals would introduce a land use that is characteristic of the local area, and which would not appear alien or out of place within this urban influence landscape setting.

- 5.14 New typologies introduced within the landscape strategy will positively enhance bio-diversity values, landscape and visual amenity.
- 5.15 The enrichment of the landscape in this respect is considered to be beneficial over the baseline situation.
- 5.16 In summary, it is considered that the proposals would not give rise to any significant long term adverse effects upon the key characteristics of the LCA. It is acknowledged that the proposals would change the character of the site, however, the proposals would not result in the loss of any important landscape features and would introduce a land use which is characteristic of the localised landscape setting. The current baseline situation will be improved in terms of landscape, visual amenity and bio-diversity. Therefore, it is concluded that the proposals can be integrated without significant adverse effects upon the localised or wider landscape setting and with a number of benefits arising.

Effect upon the Visual Environment

- 5.17 Seventeen viewpoints have been identified in order to demonstrate the visibility of the site within the localised and wider setting.
- 5.18 The views are taken from publicly accessible viewpoints and although are not exhaustive, are considered to provide a fair representation of the visual environment within which the site is set. The visual analysis seeks to identify those views that will, potentially, experience the greatest degree of change as a result of the proposals. The viewpoints are illustrated on the Viewpoint Location Plan within **Appendix 2**.
- 5.19 Please note, Viewpoint 4 has not been assessed as it is an internal view from within the site itself to provide the reader with context.

Table 3: Effect upon the Visual Environment

Viewpoint	Location	Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effect
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1	View from corner of Chapel Lane and Atterton Lane	Road users	Medium	Low	Moderate/Minor
	NOTES: The new development would be seen as a continuation of existing buildings that include residential and the Parish Rooms and where derelict and unattractive site buildings are replaced with high quality new homes set behind native hedgerow frontages to reflect the character of the local lanes. For road users the focus is not on the view. Rather it is on the road and travel along it. Due to movement of travel, duration is short, and the context already includes development of the type proposed. Existing trees and hedgerows will combine with those proposed to ensure a softening in views is maintained. The significance of the effect will be moderate/minor adverse, localised and not significant.				
2	View from Atterton Lane	Road users	Medium	Low	Moderate/Minor
	NOTES: View towards the proposed development for motorists will be well filtered, by the presence of the dense intervening vegetation on both sides of the lane. The new development would add roof tops to the filtered view where rooftops of dwellings on Atterton Lane and the Parish Rooms already exist. For road users the focus is not on the view. Rather it is on the road and travel along it. The significance of effect will be moderate/minor adverse, localised and not significant.				
3	View from PRoW in site	PRoW users	High	Low	Moderate
	NOTES: The view for footway users is across the field. The evergreen Cypress hedge boundary to Chapelfield Lodge with roof top beyond conveys a domestic interface rather than countryside and screens views or any potential rural connectivity beyond for the viewer. The proposals will include a native screening hedgerow at this point between Parish Rooms and the viewer with treed hedgerow of native species and wildflower edge creating a new feature in the view on the redline edge. The 5 dwellings sit back close to Chapel Lane in the view. The hedgerow features will ensure that the new built form sits softened in the view so as not to be overly dominant, the effect reducing as planting matures. Built form already lies within views (see VP4) from the PRoW and the duration of the change would be very short. The blue line field remains as green field space but with the potential for enhancements with wild flowers and hedgerow strengthening. The significance of effect will be moderate adverse, short in duration, very localised, in keeping and not significant for those few users of the PRoW.				
4	PRoW within field looking at context	PRoW users	N/A	N/A	N/A
	NOTES: <i>The context of the site shows the urban fringe character rather than countryside to the west. Built form off Kennel Lane and Chapel Lane is present where residential dwellings occur and other paraphernalia such as sheds, small paddocks and varying styles of enclosure.</i> <i>The existing intervening planting of trees and other vegetation also shows the containment of views.</i> <i>The immediate context to the west and east is not countryside.</i>				

5	PRoW	PRoW users	High	Low	Moderate
NOTES: The close views from the PRoW convey a developed character where existing domestic dwellings off Chapel Lane combine with the Parish Rooms and the poor quality barns/stables to form a very close skyline. The 5 proposed dwellings will slot into this scene as both a replacement of poor built form in the case of the barns and stables and an extension of existing dwellings in the form of the Chapel Lane houses and also the Parish Rooms in the view and would not appear as a jarring introduction. The foreground pasture field will remain, potentially enhanced by wildflowers and with a substantial new native hedgerow feature with native trees. This will ensure a soft and visually softening interface is delivered. The significance of effect will be moderate adverse, localised and not significant					
6	PRoW (very little used)	PRoW users	High	Low	Moderate
NOTES: The view from the arable field is shortened by the presence of the rear of dwellings off Chapel Lane and Atterton Lane that combine with existing mature vegetation to form a close skyline. The character of the dwellings is modern and generic. The strengthening of boundaries, the introduction of new native hedgerow interface with trees assists in filtering views where the blue line green field remains within views and the building line of the 5 proposed dwellings sitting in line with existing. The introduction of the dwellings would be in keeping with the baseline, buildings softened by vegetation in views. The significance of effect will be moderate adverse, localised and not significant					
7	Chapelfield Lodge on Chapel Lane	Road users	Medium	Low	Moderate/Minor
NOTES: The visual effect of the domestic curtilage of Chapelfield Lodge is apparent in the view. The non-native Cypress hedge, buildings and new walls are strong visual features, the 5 proposed dwellings sitting against the Cypress hedge but fully screened as a result. This is a large domestic plot on Chapel Lane. The introduction of 5 dwellings would not be out of keeping and would benefit from the screening effect of Chapelfield Lodge. The significance of effect will be moderate/minor adverse, localised and not significant.					
8	Chapel Lane	Road users	Medium	Low	Moderate/Minor
NOTES: The panoramic view is dominated by the arable agricultural large-scale setting to Witherley. The spire of St Peter's church sits proudly in the line of settlement within the view. Chapelfield Lodge, its numerous buildings, garden trees and the Cypress hedge screen anything beyond from view, including the 5 proposed dwellings located further behind it all. The composition of the wider panoramic view will remain relatively unchanged by the proposal, where any additions would be very minor and in keeping. The significance of effect would be moderate/minor adverse and not significant.					

9	PRoW	PRoW users	High	Negligible	Moderate/Minor
	NOTES: Dense intervening vegetation dominates the view and shortens the depth. Built form is present. The proposal sits beyond the intervening vegetation and the proposal includes a landscape strategy to strengthen and introduce new hedgerow features with trees which would increase the quantum in the view further. The 5 dwellings would barely register in the view and would fit with the prevailing dwellings and other buildings off Chapel Lane well. The significance of effect would be moderate/minor adverse and not significant.				
10	Kennel Lane junction	Footway users	Medium	None	None
	NOTES: The proposal lies beyond intervening buildings and vegetation and is not visible. As the magnitude of effect is no change the significance of effect will be none.				
11	Edge of village at A5 junction	Road users	Medium	None	None
	NOTES: The proposal lies at a distance and beyond intervening vegetation and built form. It is not visible. As the magnitude of effect is no change the significance of effect will be none.				
12	A5 pub car park	Road users	Medium	None	None
	NOTES: The proposal lies at a distance and beyond intervening vegetation across the flat landform. It is not visible. As the magnitude of effect is no change the significance of effect will be none				
13	PRoW	PRoW users	High	Negligible	Moderate/Minor
	NOTES: From the wide arable landscapes that surround Witherley, views towards it are well filtered and screened by the density of trees and other vegetation close to it. They effectively truncate views to the wider landscape beyond and form the skyline. Roof tops can be discerned in the view that is otherwise dominated by vegetation. The roof top of the Parish Rooms together with others can just be noted at this distance along the settlement edge. However, they are very small components and the addition of 5 more roofs nearby would have little visual effect and would be in keeping. The significance of effect would be moderate/minor adverse and not significant.				
14	Atterton Lane near PRoW	Road users	Medium	None	None
	NOTES: The proposal lies beyond intervening vegetation and is not visible.				

	As the magnitude of effect is no change the significance of effect will be none.				
15	PRoW	PRoW users	High	None	None
	NOTES: The proposal lies beyond intervening vegetation and is not visible at this distance. As the magnitude of effect is no change the significance of effect will be none.				
16	PRoW	PRoW users	High	None	None
	NOTES: The proposal lies beyond intervening vegetation and is not visible at this distance. As the magnitude of effect is no change the significance of effect will be none.				
17	Drayton Lane	Road users	Medium	None	None
	NOTES: The proposal lies beyond intervening vegetation and is not visible at this distance. As the magnitude of effect is no change the significance of effect will be none.				

- 5.20 As an overview, the assessment clearly shows that the application site is highly visually contained, with the clearest views of the proposals limited to only close views near to site boundaries along the PRoW passing through the site and along Chapel Lane. As boundary vegetation establishes so too the level of visibility reduces.
- 5.21 The small scale of proposed development (5 units) that follow the line of development off Chapel Lane would not be out of keeping, would see the restoration of landscape elements that soften and filter views and would not represent a jarring introduction.
- 5.22 There are no medium or longer distance views of the proposals.
- 5.23 It is not surprising that views along the PRoW passing through the site or those road users on Chapel Lane would register the most change, given their very close proximity. However, while a change will occur, it is not to say that change is necessarily harmful given the potential for the removal of unattractive features and replacement with better. Given the closeness of the receptor groups these changes are localised only.

Effect upon landscape related policy

NPPF

- 5.24 The loss of an area of neglected landscape containing derelict buildings, invading vegetation and poor enclosing elements (or absent) and replacement with better that includes trees and other vegetation is beneficial. The site is not “valued” in NPPF terms. Paragraph 174 requires planning policies and decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment and this is achieved within the proposals.

NPPG

- 5.25 As with NPPF, NPPG seeks high quality design standards that respects the character of sites and their contexts.
- 5.26 Through the detail design process, high quality can be achieved.

The Hinkley and Bosworth Local Plan

SADMP Policy DM4 Safeguarding the Countryside and Settlement Separation

- 5.27 This policy seeks to protect the intrinsic value, beauty, open character and landscape character from unsustainable development.
- 5.28 The small-scale proposal does not have a significant adverse effect on the intrinsic value, beauty, open character and landscape character of the countryside as the LVIA has demonstrated.

SADMP DM10 Development and Design

- 5.29 Development will be permitted where it would not have a significant adverse effect on the privacy and amenity of nearby residents and occupiers of adjacent buildings.
- 5.30 The Parish Rooms indent into the site and while the Council and Inspector raised concerns regarding noise, the addition of an acoustic and vegetative feature will deliver mitigation.
- 5.31 The LVIA has also demonstrated that the proposal complements and enhances the character of the area with regard to scale, layout, density, mass, design, materials and architectural features.

- 5.32 In addition, it incorporates a high standard of landscape proposals in both the red and blueline areas which add to the quality of the design and siting.

Addressing reasons for refusal and responding to the appeal

- 5.33 In response, the proposal is smaller in scale (5 units reduced from 10), occupies a linear frontage along Chapel Lane which reflects other residential buildings and also the Parish Rooms off Chapel Lane and incorporates mitigating and enhancing measures.
- 5.34 The LVIA has demonstrated that the site area off Chapel Lane aligns more with the urban fringe influences and character that prevails rather than reflecting a character of “countryside.” The blueline area allows benefits from enhancement and bio-diversity enrichment and in general the landscape and visual effects over the baseline represent a betterment.
- 5.35 The proposal dovetails between built form that assists in the integration and containment of the proposal in combination with vegetation and landcover generally. This is upheld through the visual assessment undertaken for this LVIA where only close views register change. That change aligns with the prevailing character, would not introduce any jarring addition and is of a type of development nearby.
- 5.36 It would not appear isolated or out of keeping with the prevailing context.
- 5.37 The LCA Sence Lowlands is a broader assessment than the site-specific assessment undertaken by Aspect in this LVIA which concludes that the proposal would not cause demonstrable harm to the character and appearance of the countryside and landscape. On the contrary, the introduction of new features that could be semi-mature and of fast-growing native species would quickly deliver visual, landscape and bio-diversity enhancement and mitigation in the short term. The introduction of trees in hedgerows and linear features would reflect the local character and NPPF aspirations regarding trees.

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Aspect Landscape Planning Ltd has been appointed to undertake a landscape and visual impact assessment relating to the full application seeking the development of 5 units on a parcel of land off Chapel Lane in Witherley. The location and context of the application site is illustrated on **ASP1** Site Location Plan and **ASP2** Site and Setting Plan.

6.2 A landscape strategy plan, **ASP3** shows how the proposal integrates into the local context and delivers both mitigation measures and potential enhancements.

Landscape

6.3 The proposals would not give rise to any significant adverse effects upon the key characteristics and sensitivities of the LCA Sence Lowlands.

6.4 The proposal does have the capacity to deliver enhancements, in particular regarding hedgerow and boundary enhancements, promotion of native species, and general enhancements in terms of landscape character, visual amenity and biodiversity over the baseline situation.

6.5 In Aspect's opinion the site-specific assessment presented within this LVIA more accurately reflects the key characteristics, landscape sensitivity or landscape value of the site and its setting at a detailed, development proposal level. This accords with GLVIA3 guidance.

6.6 In summary, the prevailing urban context is demonstrated as influencing the character of the site and remains an important presence within the site's immediate setting. There is no perception of remoteness or tranquillity and a character that is more urban fringe than countryside prevails.

6.7 The proposals would be well contained, within the immediate setting of Witherley to which it is associated and where the proposed development would be contiguous along Chapel Lane in a characteristically linear fashion.

Visual

6.8 The site benefits from a good degree of visual enclosure resulting in only close views. Middle and long distance views from the wider area are not afforded. In the main only when passing along the PRoW or Chapel Lane are views afforded.

- 6.9 The introduction of new landscape typologies and new habitats ensures that visual amenity is not only maintained but enhanced and any new development is adequately softened to fit with existing built form. Potential landscape and biodiversity enhancements could provide further enrichment.

Policy

- 6.10 The LVIA has considered that landscape and visual matters have been appropriately addressed and that this will form part of the consideration of the planning balance.

Conclusions

- 6.11 The site represents an appropriate location, and the application proposals offer environmental benefits, a potentially high quality of design that is commensurate with the receiving landscape setting and enhancements to the localised and wider landscape character that favour the sustainability of this site in policy terms.
- 6.12 It is considered that the application site and receiving environment has the capacity to accommodate the proposals as supported by others. The proposals will not result in significant harm to the landscape character or visual environment and, as such, it is considered that the proposed development can be successfully integrated in this location and is supportable from a landscape and visual perspective.