

LAND TO THE REAR OF 34 KEATS LANE EARL SHILTON, LEICESTERSHIRE



October 2025

Revision A

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

PROPOSED DWELLINGS LAND TO THE REAR OF 34 KEATS LANE EARL SHILTON, LEICESTERSHIRE

1303 LVA A LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DSA Environment & Design Ltd. have been commissioned to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) for a parcel of land to the rear (north) of 34 Keats Lane in Earl Shilton, Leicestershire to accompany an outline planning application for 10 dwellings. The local planning authority is Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.

The LVA follows a standard procedure. It assesses the ways in which the proposed development would have an effect on the existing landscape character and visual amenity of receptors in the surrounding area. A desktop study followed by a field survey in February 2024 has been undertaken to establish the landscape and visual baseline.

Proposed access is sought directly from Keats Lane through land on the eastern side of number 34. The site measures approximately 0.86 hectares, being roughly triangular in shape (135m x 120m), with a spur to the south for access. It is currently divided into several pastoral fields used for grazing horses.

The site lies within '**NCA94 - Leicestershire Vales**', which covers all of the 3km study area. The landscape is characterised by a *"mixture of pasture and arable agriculture, with any woodland cover formed largely from spinneys and copses on the ridges."*

At a local level, the site is covered by the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Local Landscape Character Assessment [HBLCA] (2017). The site lies within the Local Landscape Character Area **LCA E 'Stoke Golding Rolling Farmland'** and lies adjacent to Sensitivity Area **UCA 10 'Earl Shilton'**.

A **slight adverse effect** is predicted on the **landscape character** on this area during construction, reducing to negligible post construction. The site contains very few notable features that would be adversely effected by the proposed development. The boundary hedges, one of the key features of the site, are to be protected and enhanced.

The LCA states that *"uncluttered rural views of church spires"* are recognised as *"sensitive to change"* and are valued for the sense of local distinctiveness they provide. The proposed development lies some 400m west of the sensitive view towards St Simon and St Jude Church, the spire of which is a prominent landmark in those views.

The proposal for ten dwellings is relatively small in scale and characteristic of the area. Direct impact on the landscape fabric and features would very much be limited to the site itself. Although visually prominent from the north, located on the north facing ridge, cul-de-sac development is already typically along other parts of Keats Lane to the west, and

along Church Street to the east.

The considerable level change across the site (approximately 12m) has dictated the form of the access road, winding down the hill. Minimising the extent of hardstanding through considered detailed design would help to reduce this adverse landscape effect.

A **slight adverse effect** is predicted on visual amenity. In the long term, the appropriate landscape mitigation and restoration is predicted to **reduce these visual effects to negligible adverse** with the possibility of **beneficial visual effects** through the enhancement of the existing boundaries and improved landscape management.

The greatest adverse visual effects are expected to be experienced during the construction phase, where the activity and movement of machinery would draw attention to and alter the visual appearance of the site. At the time of the field survey, a neighbouring parcel of land (which has been consented for housing) was in the earthworks phase of construction. The development of this land for housing is likely to lessen the adverse visual effects attributed to the proposed development for ten dwellings as the presence of more housing would lessen the visual change attributed to the proposed development.

The existing hedged boundaries around the site, in particular along the north eastern side, are tall and, in places, dense. Maintaining and enhancing these hedges would be important in limiting the visibility of the proposed dwellings and therefore reducing the magnitude of change.

Beneficial effects would be experienced from the removal of the degraded stables, area of hardstanding and disused ménage. The nature of the change would not be uncharacteristic locally, where houses and streets are common. Public footpaths along alleyways etc. through Earl Shilton are also a very common characteristic locally. The proposed public footpath diversion would echo this feature. The proposed dwellings do respect the layout and orientation of the dwellings along Keats Lane.

Measures such as a **landscape strategy** with following **detailed landscape scheme** and **landscape management plan** are suggested. It is anticipated that these measures can be adequately secured by conditions attached to a planning decision.



**AROUND 400M FROM THE SITE IS QUEEN ELIZABETH II HALL FIELD CONTAINING ST SIMON
ST JUDES CHURCH AND THE FORMER SITE OF EARL SHILTON CASTLE**

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1. DSA Environment & Design Ltd. have been commissioned to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) for a parcel of land to the rear (north) of 34 Keats Lane in Earl Shilton, Leicestershire to accompany an outline planning application for 10 dwellings. The local planning authority is Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.
- 1.1.2. The location of the site is shown in **Appendix C**. The site is only accessible at present along a driveway through 34 Keats Lane. Proposed access is sought directly from Keats Lane through land on the eastern side of number 34.
- 1.1.3. The site measures approximately 0.86 hectares, being roughly triangular in shape (135m x 120m), with a spur to the south for access. It is currently divided into several pastoral fields used for grazing horses, although was not being grazed at the time of the field survey.
- 1.1.4. The southern boundary adjoins the rear of the existing dwellings along Keats lane, with the 'spur' connecting to Keats Lane. The north eastern boundary is formed of a mixed species hedge comprising hawthorn, hazel, elm, holly and elder. The western boundary is also formed of a hedge comprising hawthorn, holly and elder. Timber post and rail fencing subdivides the site to form horse paddocks that accompany the stables in the south western corner of the site.
- 1.1.5. This report:
- Describes the existing landscape and visual amenity baseline;
 - Describes the key landscape and visual related elements of the proposed development;
 - Assesses the sensitivity of the landscape and visual amenity baseline to the type and scale of development proposed;
 - Describes the nature of the change to the landscape and visual amenity baseline;
 - Assesses the magnitude of the changes to the landscape and visual amenity baseline; and
 - Describes any mitigation and enhancement measures recommended to offset the adverse effects identified.

- 1.1.6. This LVA has been requested by Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council as the site neighbours Sensitivity Area **UCA 10 'Earl Shilton'** of the Hinckley and Bosworth Landscape Character Assessment.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE

- 2.1.1. The LVA of the proposed development has been undertaken in general accordance with the “Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition” (“GLVIA 3”) published by the Landscape Institute and IEMA, 2013, and “Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment” guidance published by Natural England and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), October 2014. As GLVIA 3 states, “the principles and processes of LVIA can also be used to assist in the ‘appraisal’ of forms of land use change or development that fall outside the requirements of the EIA Directive and Regulations.”
- 2.1.2. It should be noted that these documents do not provide a prescriptive approach but identify principles and good practice.
- 2.1.3. A widely accepted glossary of terms used for this appraisal can be found in **Appendix B**.

2.2. PRINCIPLES AND OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

SCOPING

- 2.2.1. The scope of the LVA was defined and carried out through desktop research and field survey.

BASELINE STUDIES

- 2.2.2. Baseline studies are necessary to gain an understanding of the existing landscape and visual conditions within the study area.
- 2.2.3. The baseline is reviewed alongside the proposed development description to identify and describe the changes that would occur and the predicted landscape and visual effects resulting from these changes.

TIMING OF FIELD SURVEY

- 2.2.4. Surveys and fieldwork were carried out in February 2024, ‘winter photography’. This means that the photography shows the ‘worst-case scenario’, where the

vegetation cover has lost its leaves and visibility is greatest.

- 2.2.5. The effects of seasonal change have been taken into account during the appraisal process.

IDENTIFICATION AND DESCRIPTION OF EFFECTS

- 2.2.6. A systematic approach is applied to identifying the effects on the landscape resource (landscape effects) and visual amenity as experienced by people (visual effects). Likely effects are examined by identifying those elements of the proposed development likely to give rise to effects and the receptors that will be affected by them.
- 2.2.7. Professional judgement is used to evaluate the ‘sensitivity’ of the receptors (both landscape and visual, separately) which is based on the susceptibility of the receptor to the type of change proposed and the value of the receptor.
- 2.2.8. The ‘magnitude’ of the effect is derived from judgements about the size and scale of the effects, extent of area affected, duration of the effect and whether effects are reversible.
- 2.2.9. The sensitivity and magnitude judgements are then combined to determine the ‘overall effect’. The elements that are combined to form this judgement are specific to the project (rather than generic to all projects). ‘Overall effect’ is also judged in the wider context considering a wide number of factors.
- 2.2.10. Further details of the methodology and general matrices for the judgement of sensitivity, magnitude and ‘overall effect’ are included in **Appendix A**.

2.3. ASSUMPTIONS, LIMITATIONS AND TECHNICAL INFORMATION

PHOTOGRAPHY

- 2.3.1. Photographs were taken towards the proposed development site from publicly accessible areas.
- 2.3.2. It is acknowledged that the proposed development may be visible from a number

of private residential properties, as well as private places of work which were not accessible. In such cases, representative views of the proposed development have been taken into consideration.

- 2.3.3. All photographs have been taken from ground level. They are therefore not wholly representative of any views from higher storey windows, elevated views within vehicles or from horse back.
- 2.3.4. All photography was taken on site by DSA Environment & Design using a Canon EOS 6D 20.2 Megapixel Digital SLR Camera with a Canon EF 50mm lens and 58mm ultra violet filter.
- 2.3.5. The panoramic views are formed from a number of separate images taken in sequence and stitched together using Adobe Photoshop's 'Photomerge' function.

3. DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

3.1. POLICY CONTEXT

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

- 3.1.1. Government guidance relevant to the consideration of this application is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

REVISED NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK 2024 (NPPF)

- 3.1.2. The NPPF (December 2024) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and advises on how these are expected to be applied, seeking to streamline the previous approach and to promote sustainable economic development. It sets out the Government's requirements for the planning system only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so. The NPPF is a material consideration in planning application decisions.
- 3.1.3. The NPPF at paragraph 7 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 continues to state that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental, and that these dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles.
- 3.1.4. At Paragraph 11, the NPPF establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. In terms of determining planning applications, this means:
- "Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; and
 - Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposals; or
 - Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole."
- 3.1.5. The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built

environment, as specified at paragraph 131. Paragraph 131 also states that: "Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities."

- 3.1.6. A key part of making better places is responding to the existing character of an area. Paragraph 135(c) requires the consideration of landscape (and historic) character and states that "developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting."

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

- 3.1.7. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.1.8. The adopted Local Plan for Hinckley and Bosworth is made up of the 2006 to 2026 Core Strategy (December 2009). The Hinckley and Bosworth Core Strategy was adopted on December 2009 and establishes, in conjunction with the 'Site Allocations & Development Management Policies DPD', provides the strategic approach to new development in Hinckley Borough and identifies the main strategic allocations.
- 3.1.9. The local plan review spans 2020 to 2041. The 'Local Development Scheme' document identifies the delivery of the Local Plan as the priority along with potential Supplementary Planning Documents.

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH CORE STRATEGY (CCS) (DECEMBER 2009)

- 3.1.10. The application site is subject to the Hinckley and Bosworth Core Strategy. A number of policies from within this document will be considered in the LVA;
- Policy 2: Development in Earl Shilton
 - Policy 6: Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage
 - Policy 16: Housing Density, Mix and Design
 - Policy 19: Green Space and Play Provision
 - Policy 20: Green Infrastructure
- 3.1.11. Please refer to supporting planning statements for further details of national and local planning policy.



The Dog and Gun Pub, Keats Lane



The motte and bailey of Earl Shilton Castle in the foreground, with St Simon and St Jude Church in the background



Public Footpath connecting the site with Keats Lane



Keats Lane



Leicester Road



Photographs capturing the natural and built character of the area around the site.



Queen Elizabeth II Hall Field

4. LANDSCAPE BASELINE

4.1. SITE LOCATION, CONTEXT AND FABRIC

- 4.1.1. The location of the site is shown in **Appendix C**, with an aerial map provided in **Appendix D**. The site would be accessed from Keats Lane, a minor suburban road which adjoins Leicester Road, an 'A' road that connects to the A47 to the north east. The site is located on the northern edge of Earl Shilton, Leicestershire, a small town located on Shilton Hill. Earl Shilton is listed in The Domesday Book as 'Sheltone' which means 'a settlement on a hill'
- 4.1.2. The site measures approximately 0.86 hectares, being roughly triangular in shape (135m x 120m), with a spur to the south for access. It is currently divided into several pastoral fields used for grazing horses, although was not being grazed at the time of the field survey.
- 4.1.3. The site sits at an altitude of approximately 108m AOD at its lowest point (northern corner) and slopes upwards to a maximum elevation of 120m AOD (southern corner). The topography of the study area is illustrated on plan in **Appendix E**. The land to the south (east and west) consists of the built fabric of Earl Shilton, whilst the land to the north (east and west) consists of agricultural fields and small villages.

SITE FABRIC

- 4.1.4. In accordance with the "Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment" guidance published by DEFRA, October 2014, the field study presents the opportunity to observe and understand how all the factors identified as part of the desk study interact.
- 4.1.5. The 'landscape fabric' of the site refers, in this context, to the physical attributes of the proposed development site itself and its immediate surroundings.
- 4.1.6. The site is roughly triangular in shape, with a spur connecting it to Keats Lane to the south. The boundaries to the north, east and west are formed of hedges and vegetation, whilst the boundary to the south is formed of fences adjoining rear gardens. A U-shaped stable block is located in the south western corner of the site with area of hard standing. The rest of the site is sub-divided by timber post and rail fencing to form horse paddocks, which are mostly sloping, with an area of flat man-made ground (former manege) in the northern corner.

- 4.1.7. The southern boundary adjoins the rear of the existing dwellings along Keats Lane, with the 'spur' connecting to Keats Lane. The north eastern boundary is formed of a mixed species hedge comprising hawthorn, hazel, elm, holly and elder. The western boundary is also formed of a hedge comprising hawthorn, holly and elder. Timber post and rail fencing subdivides the site to form horse paddocks that accompany the stables in the south western corner of the site.

PERCEPTUAL CHARACTER

- 4.1.8. The layers of natural, socio-cultural, and perceptual information should be analysed and viewed together to identify the relative value or importance attached to a landscape. (DEFRA, October 2014)
- 4.1.9. People's responses to landscapes are subjective and can vary based on the different experiences of any one individual. Professionally informed judgements about perceptual character have been made, based on recommended factors for assessment such as tranquillity, movement, noise and naturalness. These factors inform the overall assessment of effects on landscape character.
- 4.1.10. A landscape that is perceived as being more tranquil than another could make it more sensitive to development. The existing site is impacted upon by the passing traffic along Leicester Road and its intervisibility with existing development and housing along Keats Lane. It was noted during the field survey that a housing development has commenced in the field to the east of the site.

4.2. DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES

- 4.2.1. There are a number of planning and heritage designations of importance within the LVA study area (shown in **Appendix F**):
- Ancient Woodlands - Kirkby Spinney 2.6km north west.
 - Scheduled Monument - Earl Shilton motte and bailey castle [Ref: 1010302].
 - Listed Buildings, including grade II* 'Church of St Simon and St Jude' [Ref: 1074259] and the Grade II 'Top House' [Ref: 1180239] on Leicester Road.
 - Conservation Areas, including Earl Shilton which is approximately 950m from the site.
- 4.2.2. The effect of the proposed development on these planning and heritage

designations will be assessed within the 'Landscape Effects' section.

- 4.2.3. This LVA will look at the visibility of the proposed development and propose mitigation recommendations to lessen any effects of the proposed development. The landscape concept also contains a number of recommendations for designing the site to best respond to the surrounding context.

4.3. WIDER LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

- 4.3.1. A map showing national and local landscape character areas and types within the study area can be found in **Appendix G**.
- 4.3.2. The Character of England's Landscape, Wildlife and Cultural Features Map (2005) produced by Natural England and English Heritage subdivides England into 159 NCAs and provides an overview of the differences in landscape character at the national scale. Each NCA is accompanied by a character description explaining the influences and features which determine the character of the area.
- 4.3.3. The site lies within '**NCA94 – Leicestershire Vales**', which covers all of the 3km study area.
- 4.3.4. The key characteristics of 'NCA94 – Leicestershire Vales' that inform this appraisal are:
- An open landscape of gentle clay ridges and valleys underlain by Mercia Mudstone and Lias groups bedrock but with an extensive cover of superficial deposits occasionally giving rise to moderately steep scarp slopes. There is an overall visual uniformity to the landscape and settlement pattern.
 - Land use characterised by a mixture of pasture and arable agriculture that has developed on the neutral clay soils.
 - The NCA's woodland character is derived largely from spinneys and copses on the ridges and more undulating land and hedgerow trees and hedgerows.
 - Distinctive river valley of the Soar and Swift, with flat flood plains and gravel terraces together with tributaries including the Sence. Riverside meadows and waterside trees and shrubs are common, along with waterbodies resulting from gravel extraction.
 - Woodland character derived largely from spinneys and copses on the ridges

and the more undulating land and from waterside and hedgerow trees and hedgerows. The density, height and pattern of hedgerows varies throughout.

- Diverse levels of tranquillity associated with contrasts between busy urban areas and some deeply rural parts. Large settlements dominate the open character of the landscape. Leicester, Lutterworth, Hinckley and Market Harborough and related infrastructure, including major roads, are often visually dominant.
- Frequent small towns and large villages often characterised by red brick buildings and attractive stone buildings in older village centres and eastern towns and villages. Frequent, imposing spired churches are also characteristic, together with fine examples of individual historic buildings.
- Rich and varied historic landscape, with the nationally important Bosworth Battlefield near Sutton Cheney, prominent historic parklands and country houses, ridge-and-furrow earthworks and important medieval settlement remains, for example at Wistow Hall, Gumley, Knaptoft and Peatling Magna.

4.4. LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

- 4.4.1. At a local level, the site is covered by the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Local Landscape Character Assessment [HBLCA] (2017). The HBLCA provides a more detailed study of local landscape character that covers the site and most of the 3km study area, and is used as the basis for assessment in Section 7.
- 4.4.2. The southern and eastern sides of the study area are covered by the Blaby District Council Local Landscape Character Assessment [BLCA] (2020) which extends to within 1.1km of the site at its closest point.
- 4.4.3. The assessment recognises ten Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) and fourteen Urban Character Areas (UCAs) each presenting unique and distinctive characters with a set of key characteristics.
- 4.4.4. The HBLCA assessment also provides a description of each LCAs integrated key characteristics (based on historical and cultural influences and natural influences). The summary assesses the key sensitivities and values and presents landscape strategies to maintain and enhance landscape character.
- 4.4.5. The site lies within the Local Landscape Character Area **LCA E 'Stoke Golding**

Rolling Farmland. The next closest LCA D 'New and Desford Rolling Farmland' lies just under 1km to the north. The southern boundary borders Sensitivity Area **UCA 10 'Earl Shilton'**. A summary of the key characteristics of both areas is provided below.

4.4.6. The key characteristics of the **LCA E 'Stoke Golding Rolling Farmland'** include:

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

4.4.7. Key sensitivities and values in this landscape have also been identified. These include:

- The rural character of the landscape, despite its proximity to urban areas, and areas with little light pollution – particularly in the north of the area which create a relative sense of tranquillity compared to some other parts of the borough.
- **Low hedgerows and mature trees are important elements because of the relatively low level of woodland in the landscape and their role in defining historic field patterns.**
- Distinctive character and local vernacular of the villages, including red brick and

traditional buildings with links to the agricultural history of the settlements. Former farmhouses and landmark buildings contribute to the sense of place and provide historic time depth.

- Historic value and associations with the nearby Bosworth Battlefield.
- **Footpaths including popular recreational routes provide connections with the wider landscape.**
- **Uncluttered rural views of church spires are sensitive to change and are valued for the sense of local distinctiveness they provide.**

4.4.8. Landscape strategies have been produced, the relevant ones recommend the following:

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

4.4.9. The key characteristics of the **UCA 10 'Earl Shilton'** include:

- **Ridgetop settlement with views over the open landscape to the north and south, visible on the skyline in views from the countryside to the north.**
- Residential development in the outskirts of the town is of mixed character.
- Workers terraces and factory buildings of red brick are a reminder of the industrial heritage of the town from the boot and shoe industry in the 19th and 20th centuries.
- Modest scale of predominantly two storey buildings fronting directly onto the street.
- Some interesting and architecturally distinctive buildings.
- Red brick and white or off-white cement render are common building materials/finishes, with slates or plain tile roofs.
- **The Church of St Simon and St Jude, is a landmark feature.**
- The historic site of a former motte and bailey castle and adjacent Hall Field open space.

4.4.10. Key Sensitivities and Values

- **Views to the surrounding rural landscape** (to the north and south) provide a sense of place and suburban character.
- **The northern settlement edge which is modest in the scale of buildings, with the church spire creating a generally well-integrated visual balance with the surrounding landscape and is vulnerable to change.**
- The legacy left by the boot and shoe industry in the remnant factory buildings and terraced workers' cottages provides a sense of local identity.
- Interesting buildings and historic features including the Red Lion pub add local distinctiveness.
- The area of the church, castle site and Hall Field provides a sense of history and green open space, enhanced by views to the open landscape beyond the town to the north.
- **The Church of St Simon and St Jude is a local landmark with historic and architectural interest, forming a visible skyline feature in views from the surrounding rural area to the north.**
- **Public footpaths and bridleways connecting the settlement with the surrounding countryside which are tied into the local history of the area (e.g.**

Oak and Ash tree footpath to Peckleton).

- The rural gateways to the town from the south and north are provide links with the surrounding countryside.

4.4.11. Townscape Strategies

- **Encourage planting of new street trees and soft landscaping to soften the streetscape.**
- **Conserve and enhance the setting of the church / castle** and open space area, improving green infrastructure links between it and other areas (planting, signage and interpretation) to extend the value of its sense of place into the wider townscape.
- **Encourage local distinctiveness and high quality design in new developments, reinforcing the distinct identities of Earl Shilton and Barwell.**
- Improve links to open spaces such as Wood Street Community Park wherever possible.



View of the site looking west from the eastern boundary



The old ménage



View up the hill, following the route of the public footpath



Bridge crossing beyond northern boundary of the site



Timber fencing within the site



Site entrance off Keats Lane



Pond just beyond northern boundary of site

Photographs capturing the character and features of the site.

5. VISUAL BASELINE

5.1. RECEPTORS

- 5.1.1. Viewpoint locations have been chosen as representative of a range of receptors in a localised area, for example where views would be available from dwellings, a road and a public right of way in the same area.

RECEPTORS ALONG PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

- 5.1.2. There are a number of public rights of way that cross this landscape in the study area, particularly to the north of Earl Shilton. There are also a high number of public rights of way that run through Earl Shilton, although most of these are visually separated from the site by intervening dwellings. There are no long distance footpaths.
- 5.1.3. There is importantly a public right of way that crosses the site (U28/1), following the north eastern boundary, running from Keats Lane to Public Footpath T94/2. T94/2 also connects to Keats Lane, adjoining to Shilton Road. Public Footpath T93/1 connects T94/2 with the junction of Shilton Road and Leicester Road.
- 5.1.4. As the land rises to the north, a few long but sparsely spread public rights of way provide views of the site and Earl Shilton more generally.
- 5.1.5. The topography and built form to the east and west of the site greatly limits its visibility, very much restricting views to the northern quarter. Views from the south are screened by built form and topography.
- 5.1.6. Verified through the field survey, longer distance views from public rights of ways further than 3km are generally screened by primarily the undulating topography and woodland.

LOCAL HERITAGE WALK – “THE LEGEND OF THE OAK AND THE ASH”

- 5.1.7. The oak and ash circular walk, part of a series of Earl Shilton Heritage Walk, runs in close proximity to the site where it runs past Keats Lane. The walk celebrates a very unique local tree, that was in fact two trees that had bonded together – an oak (*Quercus robur*) and an ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*).
- 5.1.8. Unfortunately in 2017, the tree was damaged in a storm and the ash tree broke away.

RESIDENTIAL RECEPTORS

- 5.1.9. Residential receptors are not specifically assessed as part of this appraisal. Effects of development in private property are frequently dealt with mainly through ‘residential amenity assessments’. However, paragraph 6.17 of GLVIA3 does state that: *“in some instances it may also be appropriate to consider private viewpoints, mainly from residential properties.”* Where this does occur, the viewpoint tends to illustrate the general character of the existing view and the likely nature of change, to consider what effects might occur.
- 5.1.10. Most residential receptors within the study area (in Earl Shilton and Barwell) are generally screened from the proposed development by a combination of built form and topography.
- 5.1.11. There are a number of residential receptors that are likely to experience effects from the proposed development. These are located primarily along Keats Lane, adjacent to the southern boundary of the site, where the rear windows and gardens of these properties overlook the site and the wider rural landscape to the north.
- 5.1.12. There is potential too for views from the rear of the dwellings along High Tor East (approximately 200m west of the site) and from a couple of dwellings off Clear View Crescent (approximately 150m east of the site).
- 5.1.13. There may also be a few dwellings in the rural landscape to the north of the site that would experience a change however these receptors are deemed to be at some distance from the site and therefore unlikely to experience any potential adverse effects.

ROAD RECEPTORS

- 5.1.14. Road receptors are deemed to be of a lower sensitivity as the activity is not solely focused around an appreciation of the landscape.
- 5.1.15. Leicester Road and Shilton Road, both north of the site, are expected to provide some clear views of the proposed development, especially in winter. Shilton Road in particular travels towards the site from the higher ground providing an elevated view of the entirety of Earl Shilton.

- 5.1.16. These are both well used, but not busy, local roads, with Leicester Road connecting Earl Shilton with the A47.

5.2. SELECTION OF VIEWPOINTS

- 5.2.1. Study of mapping and analysis of local topography has identified where views are likely to be available. Twelve viewpoints have been chosen at locations where visual effects are thought to be likely, or, to demonstrate that visual effects are thought to be unlikely.
- 5.2.2. Seven of the twelve chosen viewpoints are located more than 200m away and demonstrate the nature of views from key locations in the wider landscape. These are located either on public rights of way or roads.
- 5.2.3. Five viewpoints have been selected that are within 200m of the site and demonstrate the nature of views of the key visual receptors in close proximity from publicly accessible areas.
- 5.2.4. The locations of the chosen viewpoints are shown in **Appendix H** with photographs from identified locations in **Appendix J** to demonstrate the extent of views available.
- 5.2.5. Viewpoints have been selected in accordance with the following criteria:
- Accessibility to the public
 - Potential number and sensitivity of receptors
 - The viewing distance and direction
 - The nature of the view (representative, specific or illustrative)
 - The view type (panorama, vista, glimpse)
 - The potential for cumulative effects in conjunction with other developments
- 5.2.6. VP1 is representative of public rights of way users along footpath T73/1, approximately 2450m north of the site close to the small village of Peckleton.
- 5.2.7. VP2 lies at the junction of public footpath T85/1 and Shilton Road, representative of both public rights of way users and road users some 1915m north west of the site.
- 5.2.8. VP3 is representative of public rights of way users along bridleway T75/1, approximately 1130m north of the site.
- 5.2.9. VP4 is located on public bridleway T95/3, just over 1km north east and is representative of public rights of way users.
- 5.2.10. VP5 is located on Shilton Road and is representative of road users 600m north of the site.
- 5.2.11. VP6 is representative of public rights of way users on public footpath T72/1 555m north of the site.
- 5.2.12. VP7 is representative of public rights of way users on public footpath T93/1 some 230m north of the site.
- 5.2.13. VP8 is located along public footpath U28/1 which connects to Keats Lane. The view looks in a south easterly direction, with the closest boundary of the site 75m away.
- 5.2.14. VP9 is located on public footpath T92/2 some 90m from the closest boundary of the site.
- 5.2.15. VP10 is located on site and is representative of public rights of way users along U28/1.
- 5.2.16. VP11 is located at the junction of Keats Lane and West Street, 10m from the proposed site entrance. The view is representative of road users and partially illustrative of views from surrounding dwellings.
- 5.2.17. VP12 is located from Keats Lane, around 50m west of the proposed entrance to the site. The view is representative of road users and partially illustrative of views from surrounding dwellings.



VIEW OF THE SITE AND SURROUNDING FIELDS. THE FIELD IN THE FOREGROUND HAS BEEN CONSENTED FOR HOUSING, AS WELL AS THE FIELD IN THE BACKGROUND.



6. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

6.1. PROPOSED DWELLINGS

- 6.1.1. The proposed application site is for 10 new dwellings on land to the rear of 24 Keats Lane, Earl Shilton. The proposal is for the retention of the existing dwelling of 34 Keats Lane. The proposed design and layout has been developed by HSSP Architects.
- 6.1.2. The dwellings will all will have 2 parking spaces. The route of the public right of way have been considered in the design of the proposed layout. Any internal boundaries will be constructed of brick walls, to match the proposed buildings, and timber fencing.
- 6.1.3. There is a fall of approximately 11.5m from the proposed access to the bottom of the site. The proposed road therefore bends on site to reach the lower level whilst minimising the proposed road falls.
- 6.1.4. A key part of the iterative nature of the LVA process is to determine necessary mitigation measures, in particular with regards to layout and landscape treatment of the site. The proposed Landscape Mitigation and Design Principles drawing is located in **Appendix L**.

7. LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

7.1. EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

- 7.1.1. The landscape effects of the proposed development on the landscape character of the study area is assessed at a range of scales below.
- 7.1.2. The key characteristics of National Character Area **NCA94 'Leicestershire Vale'**, are typical of the site and study area. In particular, "frequent small towns and large villages often characterised by red brick buildings and attractive stone buildings in older village centres and eastern towns and villages" and "frequent, imposing spired churches, together with fine examples of individual historic buildings" are typical of the local context.
- 7.1.3. The local landscape character assessment, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Local Landscape Character Assessment (2017), provides a more detailed characterisation of the site and study area. The site lies within the Local Landscape Character Area **LCA E 'Stoke Golding Rolling Farmland'**, but borders **UCA 10 'Earl Shilton'** along its southern boundary.
- 7.1.4. At a detailed scale, the site is typical of the local landscape character, described as having a 'small to medium scale rectilinear field pattern divided by low hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees.' Again the "uncluttered rural views of church spires" are recognised as "sensitive to change" and are valued for the sense of local distinctiveness they provide.
- 7.1.5. The proposal for ten new dwellings is relatively small in scale. Their proposed location, adjacent to the existing built form of Earl Shilton, will aid their integration with the existing built fabric.
- 7.1.6. Views of the site are only available at distance from the north. The site lies around 400m west of the sensitive view towards St Simon and St Jude Church, the spire of which is a prominent landmark in those views. There is therefore a degree of visual separation between the site and the church spire. The proposal for ten dwellings is characteristic of the view and therefore the adverse effect on the character of that views is deemed to be low.
- 7.1.7. The ten dwellings would be accessed off a new cul-de-sac access road on the northern side of Keats Lane. Although visually prominent from the north, located on the north facing ridge, cul-de-sac development is already typical along other

parts of Keats Lane to the west, and along Church Street to the east. The proposed development would not extend any further northwards than the other dwellings that extend Earl Shilton 'into the countryside'.

- 7.1.8. These cul-de-sacs too are of a similar scale to the development proposed. Importantly too, some of these examples illustrate where more recent development has been located 'at the rear' of existing properties and their back gardens.
- 7.1.9. The considerable level change across the site (approximately 12m) has dictated the form of the access road, winding down the hill. This has resulted in a considerable amount of road to serve ten dwellings. Minimising the extent of hardstanding through considered detailed design would help to reduce this adverse landscape effect. Reducing the extent of patios could be one way to do this for example.
- 7.1.10. The dwellings themselves are modest in scale and directly comparable with other nearby dwellings. The layout respects and echoes the 'grid-like' layout of the existing streets. The proposed roofs are grey in colour. Red brickwork is used to match the local aesthetic.
- 7.1.11. The layout of the proposed development will impact the nature and character of the public right of way on site. As the land is agricultural at present, several stiles lie along its route. The proposed development would make the public footpath more accessible, assuming a bound / semi-bound surface is used.
- 7.1.12. The site at present is used for horse grazing. There is a U-shaped stable block in the south western corner with large area of hard standing. There is an old ménage in the north eastern corner. Although the site is steeply sloping, the levels have been considerably altered already from their natural state. The proposed earthworks on site would therefore not be out of character.

7.2. IMPACT ON SITE FABRIC

- 7.2.1. Direct impact on the landscape fabric and features would very much be limited to the site itself.
- 7.2.2. The construction period is likely to bring about the most adverse effects, with the

activity of machinery undertaking the considerable level changes required. At the time of the field survey, the neighbouring land to the east which is several times larger (proposed for housing) was under construction, with considerable earthworks altering the site's natural form.

- 7.2.3. The adverse effects of the construction period are though temporary and will cease once construction is complete. Restricting work to daylight hours will reduce the magnitude of effect during the construction phase. Hedge protection fencing should be installed prior to works commencing to protect the existing hedges.
- 7.2.4. Hedgerows are a strong feature of both the local landscape and the site. The proposal seeks to retain and reinforce the existing hedgerows which show signs of under management. Gapping up and restocking of the hedge boundaries would help to create a robust ecological framework around the perimeter of the site.
- 7.2.5. The proposed layout at present restricts the potential for much in the way of tree planting. Tree planting along the entrance road is possible, to link the ecological framework on site with Keats Lane. Trees would also visually 'soften' the view and enhance the current street scene. Otherwise proposed trees would typically be located in back gardens where the space allows.
- 7.2.6. It is suggested that the proposed bin storage location is screened using instant hedge planting to reduce the potential adverse effect this could have on the site entrance.

DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES, NATURE AND HERITAGE ASSETS

- 7.2.7. Due to the nature of the development, no adverse effects are expected on any designated landscape, nature or heritage assets.

7.3. SUMMARY OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

- 7.3.1. A **slight adverse effect** is predicted on the **landscape character** on this area during construction, reducing to negligible post construction. The site contains very few notable features that would be adversely effected by the proposed development. The boundary hedges, one of the key features of the site, are to be protected and enhanced.

- 7.3.2. The site lies within the National Character Area '**NCA94 - Leicestershire Vale**' and Local Landscape Character Area **LCA E 'Stoke Golding Rolling Farmland'** and is generally typical in character with both.
- 7.3.3. The LCA states that "uncluttered rural views of church spires" are recognised as "sensitive to change" and are valued for the sense of local distinctiveness they provide. The proposed development lies some 400m west of the sensitive view towards St Simon and St Jude Church, the spire of which is a prominent landmark in those views. There is therefore a degree of visual separation between the site and the church spire.
- 7.3.4. The proposal for ten dwellings is relatively small in scale and characteristic of the area. Although visually prominent from the north, located on the north facing ridge, cul-de-sac development is already typical along other parts of Keats Lane to the west, and along Church Street to the east. The proposed development would not extend any further northwards than the other dwellings that extend Earl Shilton 'into the countryside'.
- 7.3.5. The considerable level change across the site (approximately 12m) has dictated the form of the access road, winding down the hill. This has resulted in a considerable amount of road to serve ten dwellings. Minimising the extent of hardstanding through considered detailed design would help to reduce this adverse landscape effect. Reducing the extent of patios could be one way to do this for example.
- 7.3.6. Direct impact on the landscape fabric and features would very much be limited to the site itself. The construction period is likely to bring about the most adverse effects, with the activity of machinery undertaking the considerable level changes required. This is though a short term and temporary effect.
- 7.3.7. The accompanying Landscape Mitigation and Design Principles drawing (**Appendix L**) recommends design principles that would help to further reduce the potential for adverse effects.

8. VISUAL EFFECTS

8.1. VIEWPOINT DESCRIPTION AND APPRAISAL

- 8.1.1. The viewpoints are described and visual effect evaluated below. Sensitivity and magnitude are combined using the matrix in **Appendix A**, as a guide, to produce an assessment of the overall effect in each case.

VIEWPOINT 1: PUBLIC FOOTPATH T73/1 ADJACENT TO CHURCH ROAD, PECKLETON

- 8.1.2. Description:** This view is from a public footpath some 2.5km north of the site. The view is representative of public rights of way users and illustrates the general nature of the view from Peckleton.
- 8.1.3. The view looks across an arable field to the distant hill on which Earl Shilton is located. Landmarks such as St Simon and St Jude Church are visible, albeit at some distance. Located at a similar altitude, the site is visible on the north facing hillside, but partially screened by the tall hedgerows along the north eastern boundary.
- 8.1.4. Potential Visual Effects:** Houses extending down the hillside from Earl Shilton is characteristic of the view, especially with the current housing developments to both the west and east of the site. The sensitive view towards the church spire is much further to the left.
- 8.1.5. The proposed dwellings are to be fairly dark in colour, reducing their visual prominence. Retaining and thickening the vegetation along the north eastern boundary will help to reduce potential adverse effects. Further tree planting on site would further limited the visibility of the proposed dwellings. In summer, it is expected that the site would be much less visible. Construction would cause a short term and temporary adverse effect.
- 8.1.6. The sensitivity of the receptor, as representative of public rights of way users locally is deemed to be medium. The magnitude of change is assessed as low, due to small extent of change in a large and open view.

Sensitivity: Medium

Magnitude of Change: Low

Potential Visual Effect: Slight adverse.

VIEWPOINT 2: JUNCTION OF SHILTON ROAD AND PUBLIC FOOTPATH T85/1

- 8.1.7. Description:** This view is located at the junction of Shilton Road and public footpath T85/1. The view is representative therefore of both road users and users of the public right of way.
- 8.1.8. The view looks directly along Shilton Road where Earl Shilton is visible on top of the hill. A network of hedgerows define a well vegetated view, with the trees associated with watercourse in the foreground a notable feature. The site is visible, located on the north facing slope. The existing buildings of Earl Shilton form the skyline.
- 8.1.9. Potential Visual Effects:** This location provides a clear view of the site and proposed development. For road users, the site is also in the direction of travel, making any change more noticeable. Due to intervening trees, housing down the slope is less characteristic of this view. A few intervening trees would though 'break up' the view of the proposed dwellings.
- 8.1.10. Retention of and thickening of the north and western boundaries would limit the potential for adverse visual effects. The construction phase is likely to bring the most adverse effects. Construction activity on the neighbouring site was clearly visible at the time of the field survey. It is assumed the neighbouring development would set a precedent for having dwellings located further down the hill. Construction would cause a short term and temporary adverse effect.
- 8.1.11. The sensitivity of the receptor, as representative of road users and public rights of way users is deemed to be medium. The magnitude of change is assessed as medium / low, due to the relative visibility of the site.

Sensitivity: Medium

Magnitude of Change: Medium / Low

Potential Visual Effect: Moderate / Slight adverse.

VIEWPOINT 3: VIEW FROM PUBLIC BRIDLEWAY T75/1

- 8.1.12. Description:** This viewpoint is located along Bridleway T75/1, approximately 1.1km north of the site. The view is representative of public rights of way users.

8.1.13. The view looks, from a lower but still slightly elevated level, across a pastoral field towards the ridge line on which Earl Shilton is located. The site is visible, although the tall hedgerow along the north eastern boundary screens much of the ground. A few intermittent mature trees restrict this view when continuing south along this bridleway.

8.1.14. Potential Visual Effects: The site and proposed development would be visible. In summer though, the tall boundary hedge along the north eastern side would provide a high degree of screening. Thickening it and filling in the gaps would further reduce the potential adverse effect of the development.

8.1.15. The development proposes to use materials similarly to those used on the dwellings along Keats Lane, helping to better integrate the proposed development visually. Tree planting scattered within the proposed development would maintain the perception of a settlement within a wooded framework. Construction would cause a short term and temporary adverse effect.

8.1.16. The sensitivity of the receptor, as representative of public rights of way users locally is deemed to be medium. The magnitude of change is assessed as low, due to the potential for screening.

Sensitivity: Medium

Magnitude of Change: Low

Potential Visual Effect: Slight adverse.

VIEWPOINT 4 : VIEW FROM PUBLIC BRIDLEWAY T95/3

8.1.17. Description: This view is located along Bridleway T95/3, at the junction with public footpath T96/1. The view is representative of public rights of way users, around 1km from the site.

8.1.18. The view looks over fairly open arable fields from a low lying position up towards the ridge on which Earl Shilton is visible. The site is partially screened by intervening trees and hedges, which also provide some visual separation to some of the buildings located on the ridge line.

8.1.19. Potential Visual Effects: This viewpoint is located further west and begins to demonstrate how views of the site even further west are screened by the topography and vegetation.

8.1.20. The site is generally very well screened locally by the thick boundary hedges that run across the hillside. This location provide a small glimpse of the southern (more elevated) part of the site.

8.1.21. The roofs of the proposed dwellings are likely to be visible in winter. The considerable size of 'The Mill' (12 Keats Lane) forms part of the distinctive skyline that would be unaffected by the development. In the summer, it is predicted that the site and proposed development would be entirely screened. Construction activity would cause the highest level of adverse visual effect. This is however a short term and temporary effect.

8.1.22. The sensitivity of the receptor, as representative of public rights of way users locally is deemed to be medium. The magnitude of change is assessed as negligible, due to high degree of existing visual screening.

Sensitivity: Medium

Magnitude of Change: Negligible

Potential Visual Effect: Negligible.

VIEWPOINT 5 : VIEW FROM SHILTON ROAD, APPROXIMATELY 600M NORTH OF SITE

8.1.23. Description: This viewpoint is located on Shilton Road and is representative of road users.

8.1.24. The views looks over the hedge that bounds the road up towards the site and the buildings of Earl Shilton that sit upon the ridge. A gap in the intervening trees reveals part of the site, although other parts of the site are still screened by vegetation. The view also illustrates how a dense hedge along public footpath T94/3 provides a high degree of screening.

8.1.25. Potential Visual Effects: Similarly to VP2, the site lies directly in the direction of travel along Shilton Road. Most of the site is screened by intervening hedges and trees, and this effect will increase during the summer.

8.1.26. Construction activity of the neighbouring development is visible. Incorporating tree planting within the development will, in time, visually integrate the proposed development with surrounding built fabric. Construction activity would draw attention to the site, however this would be a short term and temporary adverse

effect.

Sensitivity: Low

Magnitude of Change: Low

Potential Visual Effect: Negligible.

VIEWPOINT 6 : VIEW FROM PUBLIC FOOTPATH T72/1

8.1.27. Description: This view is on public footpath T72/1, approximately 555m north of the site. The view is representative of public footpath users.

8.1.28. The view looks across a pastoral field up to the buildings on the ridge line. The earthworks of the neighbouring development are clearly visible. The site is partially visible through the tall boundary hedgerow that runs along the north eastern boundary. The site is fairly well screened at present, although the closer proximity of the viewpoint does mean some gaps through the existing hedge are available. The existing stable block is visible at the top of the site.

8.1.29. Potential Visual Effects: The character of the view is defined by a combination of vegetation and built form on the horizon. The proposed development would not alter this, however new dwellings would be visible down the hillside. Assuming the neighbouring development continues, this would look like a 'natural' extension of the settlement edge. In the summer, it is predicted that the proposed development would be more heavily screened. Construction activity would cause the highest level of adverse visual effect. This is however a short term and temporary effect.

8.1.30. The sensitivity of the receptor, as representative of public rights of way users locally is deemed to be medium. The magnitude of change is assessed as low, due to degree of existing visual screening and potential for further mitigation.

Sensitivity: Medium

Magnitude of Change: Low

Potential Visual Effect: Slight adverse.

VIEWPOINT 7 : VIEW FROM PUBLIC FOOTPATH T93/1

8.1.31. Description: This view is located on public footpath T93/1, in close proximity to the junction of Leicester Road / Shilton Road. The view is representative of public

rights of way users.

8.1.32. The view looks up across a pastoral field to the buildings on the ridge. The site is partially visible through the tall boundary hedge along the north eastern side of the site.

8.1.33. Potential Visual Effects: From this viewpoint, the construction activity of the neighbouring development is visible in the foreground. The character of the view is defined by a combination of vegetation and built form on the horizon. The proposed development would not alter this, however new dwellings would be visible existing down the hillside.

8.1.34. The tall vegetation along the north eastern boundary provides a dense screen that screens most of the site at this angle. In summer, this effect is likely to be greater. The proposed dwellings would not affect the existing skyline reducing the magnitude of change.

8.1.35. The sensitivity of the receptor, as representative of public rights of way users locally is deemed to be medium. The magnitude of change is assessed as low, due to degree of existing visual screening and potential for further mitigation.

Sensitivity: Medium

Magnitude of Change: Low

Potential Visual Effect: Slight adverse.

VIEWPOINT 8 : VIEW FROM PUBLIC FOOTPATH U28/1

8.1.36. Description: This view is located on public footpath U28/1 approximately 75m from the western boundary of the site. The view is representative of public rights of way users locally.

8.1.37. The view looks across a pastoral field and over the western boundary hedge of the site. The buildings and dwellings of Keats Lane form the background and skyline. The site, along with its associated infrastructure, including fencing, stables etc. are clearly visible.

8.1.38. Potential Visual Effects: This viewpoint provides the clearest view of the site from outside the site boundary. The footpath is slightly elevated above the western boundary. The proposed dwellings, especially those higher up the hill would be

clearly visible. Retaining the existing vegetation along the site boundary would be important in minimising the magnitude of change.

- 8.1.39. The adverse visual effects would be greatest during the construction phase, as construction activity would be clearly visible. Construction would though be a short term and temporary adverse effect.
- 8.1.40. The existing buildings along Keats Lane are very clearly skylined without any trees or vegetation to 'break up' their mass. Integrating trees within the proposed layout would create the effect of nestling the dwellings into the slope.
- 8.1.41. The sensitivity of the receptor, as representative of public rights of way users locally is deemed to be medium. The magnitude of change is assessed as medium, reducing to low in the long term with the appropriate mitigation.

Sensitivity: Medium

Magnitude of Change: Medium reducing to low

Potential Visual Effect: Moderate adverse reducing to slight adverse in the long term.

VIEWPOINT 9: VIEW FROM PUBLIC FOOTPATH T94/2

- 8.1.42. **Description:** This view is located along public footpath T94/2 approximately 90m from the western boundary of the site. The view is representative of public rights of way users locally.
- 8.1.43. The view looks through a rare gap in a fairly substantial hawthorn hedge. The view is slightly elevated, providing a slightly obscured glimpse of the southern end of the site.
- 8.1.44. **Potential Visual Effects:** This view is similar in location to VP8 but demonstrates how the hedge that bounds the public footpath greatly limits views of the site. This viewpoint illustrates a rare gap in the hedge where a glimpsed view is available. 'The Mill' building (12 Keats Lane) sits prominently on the hill. The proposed dwellings would add only a small amount of built form. For the most part, the views along the public footpath would not change. In summer, the site is not expected to be visible at all.
- 8.1.45. The sensitivity of the receptor, as representative of public rights of way users

locally is deemed to be medium. The magnitude of change is assessed as negligible.

Sensitivity: Medium

Magnitude of Change: Negligible

Potential Visual Effect: Negligible.

VIEWPOINT 10: VIEW FROM PUBLIC FOOTPATH U28/1 (WITHIN SITE BOUNDARY)

- 8.1.46. **Description:** This view is located on site, from public footpath U28/1. The view is representative of public rights of way users locally.
- 8.1.47. The view looks down across the site. The houses off High Tor East are visible in the background, whilst the distant rural landscape to the north is visible to the right. The stable block and associated infrastructure are visible on site.
- 8.1.48. **Potential Visual Effects:** This viewpoint is located on the public footpath on site. The magnitude of change during and post construction is therefore going to be considerable. The landscape quality of the site is affected at present by various man-made changes, including a stable block, timber fencing and a disused ménage which has altered the site's natural topography.
- 8.1.49. The proposed public footpath route would be enclosed by the hedge along the north eastern boundary on one side, and the rear boundary of back gardens on the other. The existing view, which does provide some distant glimpses, would likely be restricted by built form. The route of the public footpath from Keats Lane follows a narrow alleyway. This character would be continued through the site.
- 8.1.50. The sensitivity of the receptor, as representative of public rights of way users locally is deemed to be medium. The magnitude of change is assessed as medium, but with potential beneficial effects through improved landscape management.
- Sensitivity:** Medium
- Magnitude of Change:** Medium
- Effect:** Moderate adverse reducing to slight adverse in the long term.

VIEWPOINT 11: VIEW FROM WEST STREET, EARL SHILTON

- 8.1.51. Description:** This view is located at the junction of West Street and Keats Lane, around 10m south west of the proposed site entrance. The view is representative of road users and partially illustrative of views from surrounding properties.
- 8.1.52. The view looks across Keats Lane to the site entrance, with no. 32 Keats Lane on the left hand side, and No. 24 Keats Lane on the right. Most of the site is not visible as the ground falls away. Key features on site are screened by the intervening dwellings.
- 8.1.53. Potential Visual Effects:** None of the proposed dwellings are expected to be visible from this location. They may however be visible from the upper storey windows of the dwellings on the northern side of Keats Lane.
- 8.1.54. A new access road and pavement would be clearly visible. The effect of this would be similar in nature to the junction opposite with West Street and so typical of the existing street scene. Introducing trees along the proposed entrance road would help to visually 'soften' the extent of hard surfacing, as would planting a hedge around the proposed bin storage location.
- 8.1.55. The sensitivity of the receptor, as representative of road users is deemed to be low. The magnitude of change is assessed as medium, but with potential through beneficial effects through improved landscape management.

Sensitivity: Low

Magnitude of Change: Medium

Potential Visual Effect: Slight adverse with potential for beneficial effects.

VIEWPOINT 12: VIEW FROM KEATS LANE, EARL SHILTON

- 8.1.56. Description:** This view is located on Keats Lane, around 50m west of the proposed site entrance. The view is representative of road users and partially illustrative of views from surrounding properties.
- 8.1.57. The view looks across Keats Lane to the site entrance, and demonstrates how the existing dwellings visually separate the street from the site.
- 8.1.58. Potential Visual Effects:** From this viewpoint further west along Keats Lane, the views of the proposed dwellings would still be screened by intervening dwellings

and the change in topography. The view of the site entrance is visible at a more oblique angle, altering the degree of effect.

- 8.1.59. Construction vehicles would still be visible traveling to and from the site which is likely to cause the greatest adverse effects. These effects would be short term however and temporary.
- 8.1.60. The sensitivity of the receptor, as representative of road users is deemed to be low. The magnitude of change is assessed as low.

Sensitivity: Low

Magnitude of Change: Low

Potential Visual Effect: Negligible.

8.2. SUMMARY OF VISUAL EFFECTS

- 8.2.1. A **slight adverse effect** is predicted on visual amenity. In the long term, the appropriate landscape mitigation and restoration is predicted to **reduce these visual effects to negligible adverse** with the possibility of **beneficial visual effects** through the enhancement of the existing boundaries and improved landscape management.
- 8.2.2. The visual effect on each assessed viewpoint is summarised.
- **VP1 Slight adverse.**
 - **VP2 Moderate / Slight adverse.**
 - **VP3 Slight adverse.**
 - **VP4 Negligible.**
 - **VP5 Negligible.**
 - **VP6 Slight adverse.**
 - **VP7 Slight adverse.**
 - **VP8 Moderate adverse reducing to slight adverse in the long term.**
 - **VP9 Negligible**
 - **VP10 Moderate adverse reducing to slight adverse in the long term.**
 - **VP11 Slight adverse with potential for beneficial effects.**
 - **VP12 Negligible.**

- 8.2.3. There are a relatively high number of public rights of way in the study area, especially in close proximity to the site. A public right of way crosses the site at present. There are a relatively low number of rural roads within the study area that are likely to allow for views of the proposed development.
- 8.2.4. Distant views of the proposed development are also very much constrained to the land that lies to the north of the site. The topography of the study area and built form of Earl Shilton screen the vast majority of views.
- 8.2.5. There are also no particularly sensitive visual receptors, such as users of long distance trails, within the study area. As is typical, residential receptors are not specifically assessed as part of this appraisal. However it is recognised that the views of some properties along Keats Lane (and other nearby streets) in close proximity to the development will experience some visual effects.
- 8.2.6. The greatest adverse visual effects are expected to be experienced during the construction phase, where the activity and movement of machinery would draw attention to and alter the visual appearance of the site. At the time of the field survey, a neighbouring parcel of land (which has been consented for housing) was in the earthworks phase of construction. The development of this land for housing is likely to lessen the adverse visual effects attributed to the proposed development for ten dwellings as the presence of more housing would lessen the visual change attributed to the proposed development.
- 8.2.7. The existing hedged boundaries around the site, in particular along the north eastern side, are tall and, in places, dense. Maintaining and enhancing these hedges would be important in limiting the visibility of the proposed dwellings and therefore reducing the magnitude of change.
- 8.2.8. Beneficial effects would be experienced from the removal of the degraded stables, area of hardstanding and disused ménage. The effects of artificial lighting has not been assessed as part of this appraisal.
- 8.2.9. The most adverse visual effects (moderate adverse) are expected to be experienced at VP8 and VP10. VP10 is located on the public footpath on site. The magnitude of change caused by the proposal is the primary reason why the visual effects will be moderate adverse. The nature of the change would not be uncharacteristically locally, where houses and streets are common. Public

footpaths along alleyways etc. through Earl Shilton are also a very common characteristic locally. The proposed public footpath diversion would echo this feature.

- 8.2.10. VP8 provides the clearest view of the site outside of its boundaries. The proposed development would therefore change the nature of the view, with the new dwellings increasing the extent of built form further down the hill. The proposed dwellings respect the layout and orientation of the dwellings along Keats Lane. As dwellings, they would be kept relatively low in height, which too helps to minimise their visual presence.
- 8.2.11. The accompanying Landscape Mitigation and Design Principles drawing **(Appendix L)** recommends design principles that would help to further reduce the potential for adverse effects. This focuses on reducing the extent of hard standing to provide greater area for 'green', including tree planting and hedge boundary thickening. Using high quality materials for the retaining walls for example, which will form a highly visible part of the scheme, would greatly improve its appearance.
- 8.2.12. The implementation of a detailed landscape scheme of enhancement and mitigation proposals will, in the long term, maintain and develop a well vegetated framework.

9. OVERALL CONCLUSION

9.1. PREDICTED EFFECTS, MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENT

- 9.1.1. A **slight adverse effect** is predicted on the **landscape character** on this area during construction, reducing to negligible post construction. The site contains very few notable features that would be adversely effected by the proposed development. The boundary hedges, one of the key features of the site, are to be protected and enhanced.
- 9.1.2. The site lies within the National Character Area '**NCA94 – Leicestershire Vale**' and Local Landscape Character Area **LCA E 'Stoke Golding Rolling Farmland'** and is generally typical in character with both.
- 9.1.3. The LCA states that "uncluttered rural views of church spires" are recognised as "sensitive to change" and are valued for the sense of local distinctiveness they provide. The proposed development lies some 400m west of the sensitive view towards St Simon and St Jude Church, the spire of which is a prominent landmark in those views. There is therefore a degree of visual separation between the site and the church spire.
- 9.1.4. The proposal for ten dwellings is relatively small in scale and characteristic of the area. Direct impact on the landscape fabric and features would very much be limited to the site itself. Although visually prominent from the north, located on the north facing ridge, cul-de-sac development is already typical along other parts of Keats Lane to the west, and along Church Street to the east. The proposed development would not extend any further northwards than the other dwellings that extend Earl Shilton 'into the countryside'.
- 9.1.5. The considerable level change across the site (approximately 12m) has dictated the form of the access road, winding down the hill. This has resulted in a considerable amount of road to serve ten dwellings. Minimising the extent of hardstanding through considered detailed design would help to reduce this adverse landscape effect.
- 9.1.6. A **slight adverse effect** is predicted on visual amenity. In the long term, the appropriate landscape mitigation and restoration is predicted to **reduce these visual effects to negligible adverse** with the possibility of **beneficial visual effects**

through the enhancement of the existing boundaries and improved landscape management.

- 9.1.7. The greatest adverse visual effects are expected to be experienced during the construction phase, where the activity and movement of machinery would draw attention to and alter the visual appearance of the site. At the time of the field survey, a neighbouring parcel of land (which has been consented for housing) was in the earthworks phase of construction. The development of this land for housing is likely to lessen the adverse visual effects attributed to the proposed development for ten dwellings as the presence of more housing would lessen the visual change attributed to the proposed development.
- 9.1.8. The existing hedged boundaries around the site, in particular along the north eastern side, are tall and, in places, dense. Maintaining and enhancing these hedges would be important in limiting the visibility of the proposed dwellings and therefore reducing the magnitude of change.
- 9.1.9. Beneficial effects would be experienced from the removal of the degraded stables, area of hardstanding and disused ménage. The greatest adverse visual effects (moderate adverse) are expected in close proximity to the site where new dwellings would visibly bring the extent of built form down the hill.
- 9.1.10. The nature of the change would though not be uncharacteristic locally, where houses and streets are common. Public footpaths along alleyways etc. through Earl Shilton are also a very common characteristic locally. The proposed public footpath diversion would echo this feature. The proposed dwellings respect the layout and orientation of the dwellings along Keats Lane.
- 9.1.11. The accompanying Landscape Mitigation and Design Principles drawing (**Appendix L**) recommends design principles that would help to further reduce the potential for adverse effects. It is suggested that a **landscape management plan**, with a requirement for active monitoring and reporting, be produced, to help guide future work to sustain the landscape over the longer term. The application should include a **landscape strategy with details to follow**, that reflects both the need to conserve local landscape character and reinforce the existing features of the landscape.

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