



CHANDIGRAH, SUMMERHOUSE LANE, HAREFIELD

Proposed Residential Redevelopment

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT

OCTOBER 2023

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

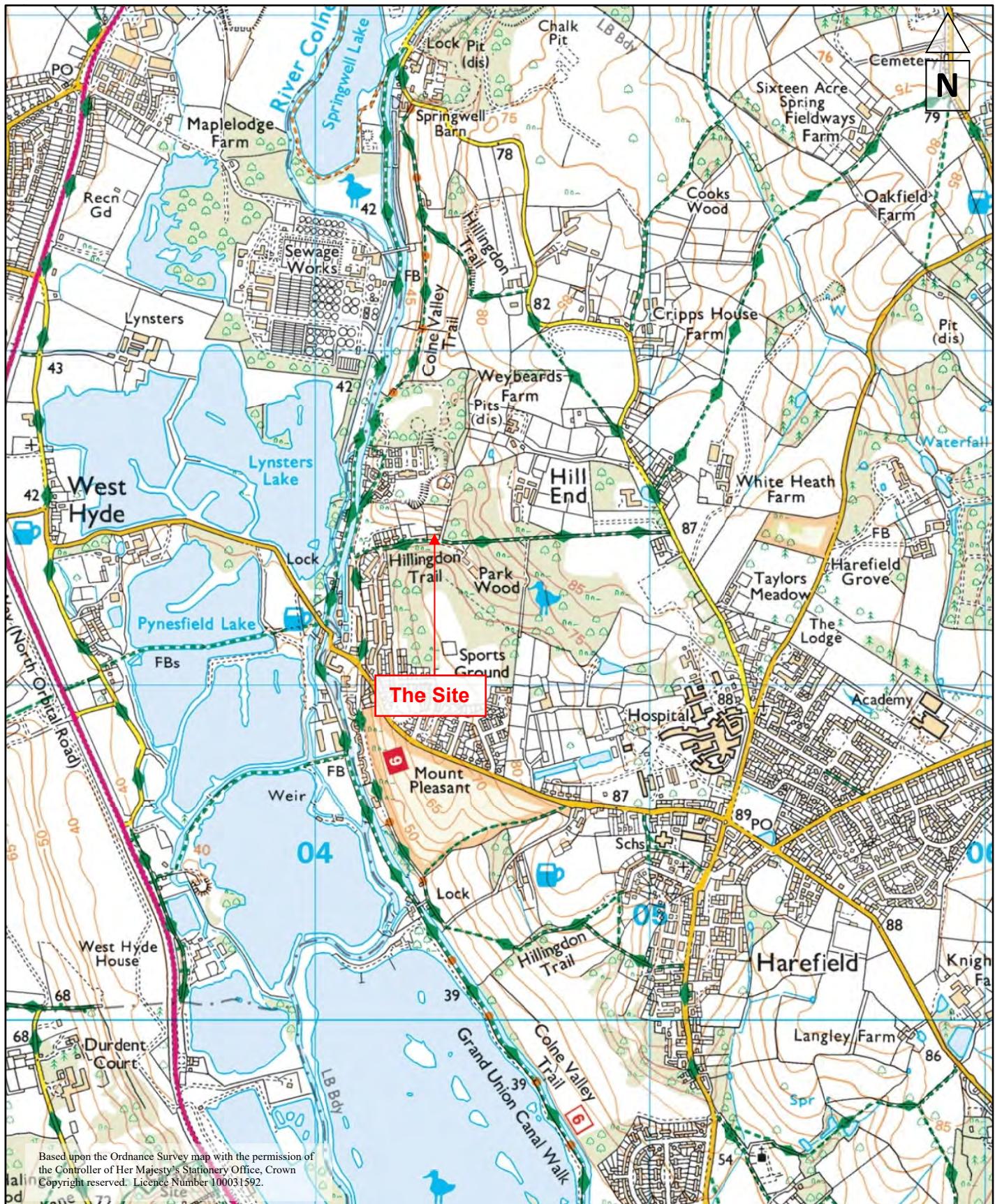
1.1.1 This report has been prepared in connection with the proposed redevelopment of land to the east of the detached residential property of 'Chandigrah', which is at the eastern end of Bellevue Terrace, off Summerhouse Lane, Harefield. The proposals involve the demolition of the existing disused equestrian storage buildings and their replacement with 4 new dwellings, together with associated access and landscape proposals. The location of the site is shown on Figure 1.

1.1.2 The site falls within the area of the London Borough of Hillingdon (LBH), and a planning application for the proposed development is to be submitted to LBH. The site is in the countryside in planning terms but is not (and has not recently been) in agricultural use. Its most recent use was equestrian, but the site is presently disused - a Certificate of Lawfulness dated 23 January 2023 (LBH reference 1131/APP/2022/2934) confirmed that the lawful use of the land is equestrian, and the land therefore comprises previously developed land in planning terms. The site is outside the settlement boundary and in the Green Belt, but the proposals would result in a reduction in both the footprint and volume of built development on the site, and would also reduce the area of hardstanding - as the site comprises previously developed land, the proposed development would therefore in principle represent appropriate development in the Green Belt.

1.1.3 The site itself comprises a former equestrian yard, with access via a hard surfaced track from the end of Bellevue Terrace and extensive areas of concrete hardstanding and two barns, which are large utilitarian, agricultural-style structures.

1.2 Structure and Scope of this Report

1.2.1 Section 2 of this report describes the baseline situation in terms of the existing site and the character, quality and sensitivity of the surrounding landscape. Section 3 then describes the extent and form of the proposed development, partly by reference to the Design and Access Statement (DAS) and drawings which form part of the application. The potential landscape and visual effects likely to result from the proposed development, and also the effects on the openness of the Green Belt are set out in Section 4, with conclusions in Section 5.



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Landscape and Visual Assessment

Not to Scale

1.2.2 The assessment has been carried out by Jon Etchells Consulting (JEC), a Cambridgeshire based practice registered with the Landscape Institute, with extensive experience of landscape and visual assessment in connection with new residential development at all scales.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 The methodology used is based on that set out in the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', produced jointly by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and the Landscape Institute ('the GLVIA', 1995, revised 2002 and again in 2013). The document 'Landscape Character Assessment, Guidance for England and Scotland, 2002' (The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage) is also relevant, and stresses the need for a holistic assessment of landscape character, including physical, biological and social factors.

1.3.2 The detailed methodology which has been followed for the assessment is set out in Appendix A.

Site Visits and Access

1.3.3 The site visits for the assessment were undertaken in early March and mid-September 2023, so it has been possible to assess views and visibility both in the late summer when deciduous vegetation is in leaf and views tend to be more limited, and in the late winter when views are in general more open. Photographs were taken from within the site and from publicly accessible points in the area around it.

2. THE BASELINE SITUATION

2.1 Site Location, Boundaries and Land Use

2.1.1 The site lies around 1.5km to north west of Harefield (see Figure 1), at the eastern end of Bellevue Terrace, which is a narrow residential street leading to the east off Summerhouse Lane. There is a narrow band of mainly residential development along Summerhouse Lane and also Barrington Drive which runs just to its east, and to the west of Summerhouse Lane is the Grand Union Canal and the Colne Valley, with its series of lakes, further to the west. The long distance routes of the Colne Valley Trail and Grand Union Canal Walk follow the line of the canal from north to south, and the Hillingdon Trail runs along Summerhouse Lane from the south, and then to the east along Bellevue Terrace to pass just to the south of the site. The dense woodland of Park Wood adjoins the site to the east and south, and is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

2.1.2 The site is in the countryside in planning terms (though it is not in agricultural use and is presently disused) and is also within the Green Belt, as are the adjoining property of Chandigrah and the houses along Bellevue Terrace to its west. Although the site is in the countryside it is enclosed and already developed, and does not have a rural character - there is no agricultural land adjacent to or visible from the site, and the site has an enclosed, somewhat run-down, edge of settlement character.

Site Boundaries

2.1.3 The site comprises a former equestrian yard, hard surfaced access and two large barns (see Photograph 1 and Figure 2). The boundaries to the site are as follow:

- The northern site boundary is marked in its eastern part by a gappy timber post and rail fence with a line of mainly poor quality ash trees up to around 10m in height along the fence line (see Photograph 1). In the western part of the site the boundary returns to the south and is marked by a chain link fence with a further line of poor quality ash trees (see Photographs 2 and 11), and then turns again to run to the west along the north side of the existing access, where there is a chain link fence and a line of closely spaced tall cypress trees which appears to be an overgrown conifer hedge (see Photograph 6).



13 > Photograph viewpoint and direction of view

See Figure 3 for viewpoints 22 to 26.

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Landscape and Visual Assessment

Not to Scale

- The eastern site boundary runs along the top of a bank which slopes upwards to the boundary from the level part of the site, and is marked by a chain link fence on concrete posts. There is a dense band of vegetation along this boundary including goat willow, ash, birch, field maple and hazel, which merges with the wider woodland to the east (see Photographs 3 and 4).
- The southern site boundary runs along the crest of another bank which runs up from the site to the line of the Hillingdon Trail (this track also provides access to an isolated property around 80m to the south east of the site), and is marked by a further line of chain link fencing on concrete posts - this fencing is in generally poor condition with some of the posts leaning into the site (see Photographs 5 to 10). Just inside the fence line is another overgrown conifer hedge, which now comprises a very closely spaced row of spindly trees up to around 12m in height.
- The short western site boundary at the western end of the access is marked by timber garden fencing which runs along the eastern side of the curtilage to the adjoining detached property of Chandigrah (see Photographs 6 and 10).

Land Use and Vegetation Within the Site

2.1.4 As noted above, the site is presently disused, and comprises a former equestrian yard and access, with two large buildings. The buildings are referred to in the DAS as Barns 1 and 2. Barn 1 is around 19m in length (from west to east) and 8.5m wide and approximately 5m in height to its ridge line (see Photographs 12 and 14). Barn 2 is slightly narrower but much longer at around 32m, and the same height to its ridge line (see Photograph 13). Both buildings are constructed from utilitarian materials, with corrugated cladding walls and roofs and blockwork bases to the elevations, with either tall metal doors (to the north side of Barn 1) or gaps (Barn 2) for access.

2.1.5 The yard area extends to the west of Barn 1 and the north of Barn 2, and is surfaced in concrete (see Photograph 11). The access runs to the west from the yard to the southern end of the access drive to Chandigrah, and is surfaced in concrete and tarmacadam (see Photograph 15).

2.1.6 There are also some unsurfaced areas within the site, to the north and east of the yard area, and to the south of the access - these areas are covered with brambles and rough grass. The trees around the site boundaries have been noted above, and there are also some trees within the body of the site, mainly self-sown ash trees. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment report has been prepared as part of the planning

submission, and that report has categorised most of the trees within the site and around its boundaries as either Category C (low quality trees with limited life expectancy) or Category U (trees in such a poor condition that they cannot realistically be retained). Category U trees include the line of conifers along the southern site boundary and many of the self-sown ash trees, which are suffering from ash die-back. The tree survey identified no Category A or B trees on the site.

2.2 Landscape Context

2.2.1 The landscape immediately around the site is as follows:

- To the north, beyond the line of ash trees, is a small paddock which slopes up to the adjoining woodland (see Photograph 16). The paddock is not in use for grazing and is becoming colonised by scrubby vegetation.
- To the east is the large expanse of Park Wood, which as noted above is an SSSI (designated as Old Park Wood for its woodland flora), with the SSSI boundary running along the eastern side of the site. Just within the woodland there is an overgrown private access track.
- To the south of the site is a track which forms an eastern continuation of Bellevue Terrace, providing access to a property within the woodland to the south east of the site (see Photograph 17), and also along which runs the long distance footpath of the Hillingdon Trail. On the south side of the track is the western part of the Park Wood woodland and SSSI.
- To the west of the site is a small grassed area adjacent to the rear garden of Chandigrah which appears to be disused, and further to the west is the property of Chandigrah (see Photographs 11 and 18) - this is a detached house with brick elevations and a concrete tiled roof which is set down below the level of Bellevue Terrace, with a drive which slopes steeply down to the house. There is also a detached garage to the north east of the house and an enclosed rear garden. To the west of Chandigrah are three short terraces of houses along the north side of the road (numbers 1 to 12 Bellevue Terrace), also set down below the level of the road (see Photograph 18). Bellevue Terrace itself is a narrow, single track lane (see Photographs 22 and 23) with pedestrian accesses into the properties to its north (parking areas are along a northern arm of Bellevue Terrace which runs to the rear of the houses). The

Hillingdon Trail runs along Bellevue Terrace past these houses and continues to the east past the site and into the woodland.

2.2.2 Further afield around the site are a small residential and commercial area at Canal Way to the north, with woodland and some more open countryside further to the north beyond that, the large expanse of Park Wood to the east and south east (with Harefield Hospital further to the south east), the western part of Park Wood and beyond that residential areas to the north of Park Lane to the south, and Summerhouse Lane, the canal and the lakes along the floor of the Colne Valley to the east.

Public Rights of Way

2.2.3 As noted above, the Hillingdon Trail (a long distance footpath which runs from Cranford to Harefield) runs along Summerhouse Lane to the west of the site and then turns to run along Bellevue Terrace and continue along the track which follows the southern site boundary. The Colne Valley Trail runs to the south from Rickmansworth to Colnbrook, largely following the line of the Grand Union Canal, and passes along Summerhouse Lane and the eastern side of the canal around 230m from the site, with the Grand Union Canal Walk slightly further away on the western side of the canal. There are no views to the site from either of these routes.

Topography

2.2.4 The site slopes generally down from south east to north west, and within that general slope a more level platform has been created at around 55m AOD (above Ordnance Datum, or mean sea level), sloping gently down from east to west, on which the two barns and yard have been set. Around that platform levels rise to the north across the sloping paddock, and also rise more steeply to the east up the bank between the platform and the adjoining woodland. There is a similar bank along the south side of the site, where levels rise from the platform up to the adjacent track (see Photograph 19). Levels within the site vary from a high point at just under 58m AOD in its south eastern corner adjacent to the track to 54.3m AOD in the north western corner. Levels within the more level platform fall from just over 55m on its eastern side to below 55m in the west, and then rise slightly along the existing access to 55.5m AOD where it meets the drive to Chandigrah.

2.2.5 In terms of wider topography the site sits on the south side of a local valley which runs to the west towards the broad expanse of the Colne Valley. Levels rise immediately to

the north of the site up the northern valley side, and also to the south and south east into Park Wood, where levels reach 80m AOD. The land falls along the line of Bellevue Terrace to the west and continues to fall into the Colne Valley, where levels are below 45m AOD.



1. View east from within the site, showing Barn 1 on the left and Barn 2 on the right of the view, with trees in Park Wood in the background along the site boundary. Three images combined, March 2023.



2. View west from within the site, showing the ash trees along the northern site boundary on the right of the view, and trees along that boundary where it returns to the south extending to the left across the view. The eastern elevation of the adjoining property of Chandigrah can just be seen through the trees in the centre of the view. Three images combined, September 2023.



3. View east from within the site, showing the western end of Barn 1, with the tall trees within Park Wood along the eastern site boundary extending across the view. Two images combined, September 2023.



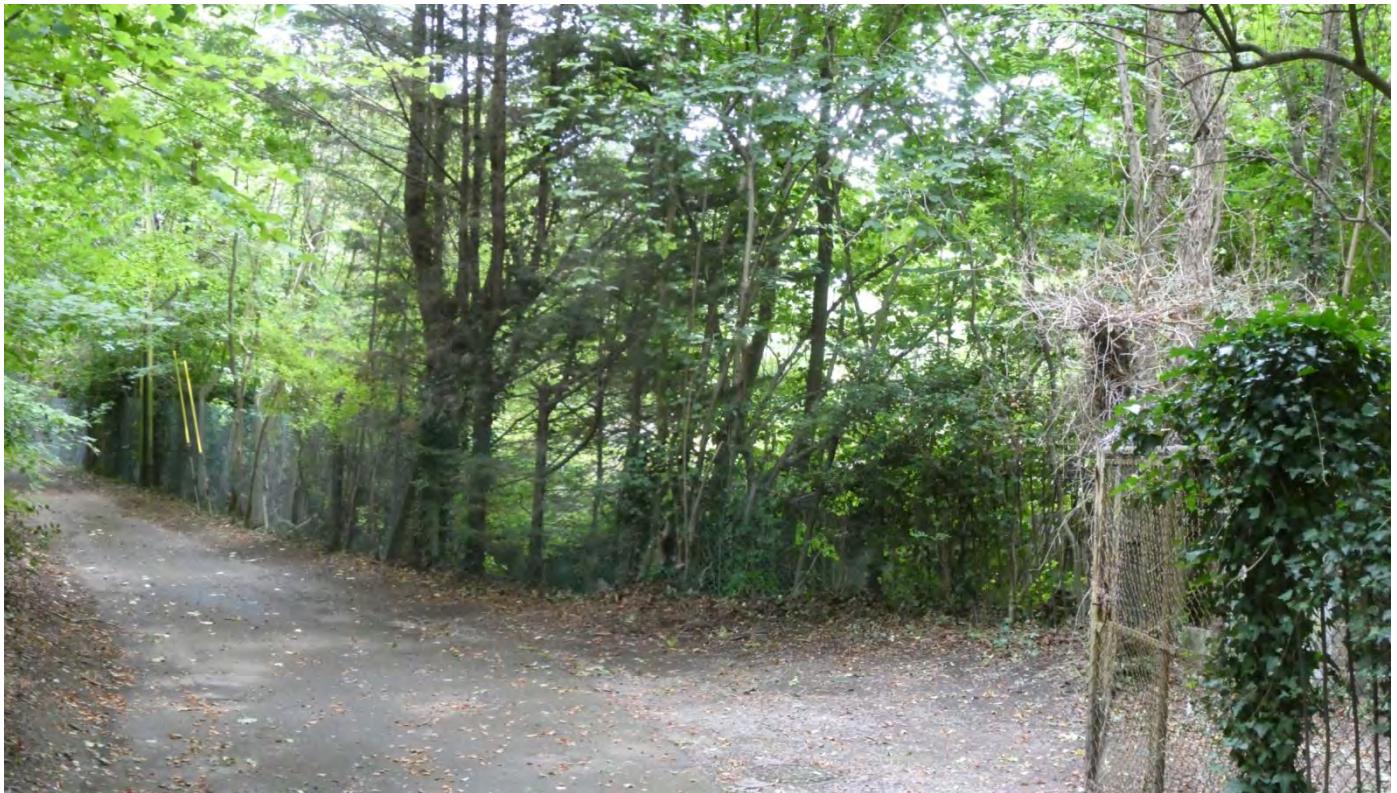
4. View south east from within the site, showing Barn 1 on the left and Barn 2 on the right of the view, with the woodland of Park Wood extending across the view, along the eastern site boundary on the left and part of the southern boundary, above Barn 2, on the right. Three images combined, September 2023.



5. View south west from the eastern part of the site, with the tall trees within the woodland along the southern site boundary extending across the view above Barn 2. Three images combined, September 2023.



6. View west along the existing access, with the timber fence between the site and the drive to Chandigrah (along the western site boundary) in the centre of the view, and overgrown conifer hedges to each side of the access. The conifers on the left of the view are along the southern site boundary Two images combined, September 2023.



7. View north west from the Hillingdon Trail to the east of the site - the chain link fence and trees on the left of the view are along the southern site boundary. The site is beyond the fence and trees and cannot be seen in the summer. Two images combined, September 2023.



8. A similar view to the west along the line of the Hillingdon Trail in the winter - the chain link fence and trees to the right of the footpath are along the southern site boundary. The site is beyond the fence and trees, and Barn 2 can be made out through the fence and vegetation in the winter. Two images combined, March 2023.



9. View north east from the Hillingdon Trail at the eastern end of Bellevue Terrace, showing the chain link fence and line of conifers along the southern boundary extending across the view. Three images combined, September 2023.



10. View east from the drive to Chandigrah at the eastern end of Bellevue Terrace - the Hillingdon Trail can be seen on the right of the view, and part of Barn 1 can just be seen between the trees in the centre of the view. The timber fencing is along the western site boundary. See Photograph 6 for a view from the opposite direction. Three images combined, September 2023.



11. View west from within the site, showing part of the extensive area of hardstanding, and trees along the western part of the northern site boundary, between the site and the adjoining paddock. The garage to Chandigrah can be seen through the trees. Two images combined, March 2023.



12. View east from within the site, showing the northern side of Barn 1. Three images combined, September 2023.



13. View south east from within the site, showing the northern side of Barn 2. Two images combined, September 2023.



14. View south west from the northern part of the site, showing part of Barn 1 on the left of the view, with the adjacent property of Chandigrah visible through the trees in the background on the right of the view. Three images combined, March 2023.



15. View east along the existing access from its western end, showing the overgrown conifer hedges to each side of the access (the trees on the right would be removed as part of the proposed development), and Barns 1 and 2 partially visible in the background between the trees. Three images combined, September 2023.



16. View north west from the north western part of the site, showing the sloping paddock which adjoins the site to the north - there are no views back to the site from the north, because of the sloping ground and enclosing woodland beyond the paddock. Two images combined, September 2023.



17. View east from the Hillingdon Trail just to the south east of the site - the footpath continues to the left of the field gate, which leads to the isolated property within the woodland to the south east of the site - there are no views back to the site from that property. Two images combined, September 2023.



18. View west from Bellevue Terrace just to the south west of the site - part of Chandigrah can be seen on the right of the view, with properties along Bellevue Terrace extending to the left across the view. Two images combined, September 2023.



19. View east along the south side of Barn 2, showing the bank which slopes up to the line of the Hillingdon Trail from within the site - the footpath is behind the fence line at the top of the slope. Two images combined, September 2023.

2.3 Landscape Character

National Landscape Character

2.3.1 Natural England has produced profiles for England's National Character Areas ('NCAs'), which divide England (including large urban areas) into 159 distinct natural areas, defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural and economic activity. The site lies within the northern part of NCA 115, the Thames Valley; this is a large area, extending from Reading in the west to Richmond in the east and Rickmansworth in the north. The summary description for the NCA includes the following:

'The River Thames provides a unifying feature through a very diverse landscape of urban and suburban settlements, infrastructure networks, fragmented agricultural land, historic parks, commons, woodland, reservoirs and extensive minerals workings.'

'Hydrological features dominate the Thames Valley, and include the Thames and its tributaries, part of the Grand Union Canal and the reservoirs which form the SouthWest London Waterbodies Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site. These features provide essential water supply services for London and the surrounds, as well as being important areas for wildlife'

and recreation in an essentially urban landscape.'

'Despite its urban character, the area is environmentally important and 6 per cent per cent of it is covered by its 38 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).'

2.3.2 The key characteristics of this area are noted as including:

- *'The numerous hydrological features provide unity to an area which otherwise lacks homogeny; these features include the River Thames and its tributaries, streams, lakes, canals and open waterbodies (the result of restored gravel workings).'*
- *'Woodlands characterise the north-western area, with the wooded character extending up to the southern edge of the Chiltern Hills.'*
- *'Although densely populated and developed, pockets of woodland, open grassland, parkland, wetlands and intimate meadows provide escape and tranquillity, and include a variety of habitats supporting important populations of many species, notably stag beetle, shoveler, gadwall and other invertebrates and wildfowl.'*
- *'Towards London in the east, the natural character of the area is overtaken by urban influences: a dense network of roads (including the M25 corridor), Heathrow Airport, railway lines, golf courses, pylon lines, reservoirs, extensive mineral extraction and numerous flooded gravel pits.'*
- *'The area has an urban character, and there are very few villages of more traditional character, although almost half of the area is greenbelt land and development has been restricted in areas like Crown Estate land and Eton College grounds.'*

Greater London Landscape Character

2.3.3 The Natural England publication 'London's Natural Signatures: The London Landscape Framework' (2011) seeks to set out a holistic assessment of London's 'Natural Landscape Areas' and also their relationship with the built-up parts of the city. It shows the site as being in the northern part of Area 1, the 'Colne River Valley'. The assessment includes the following description:

'Within the northern Colne Valley, the settlement pattern is relatively sparse, although there is a corridor of villages along the Grand Union Canal. To the south the valley is more densely developed than the north, with industrial towns such as Uxbridge, Yiewsley and West Drayton and London's largest airport, Heathrow. The historic cores which remain within the settlements of Harefield, Uxbridge, West Drayton and Harmondsworth suggest how settlement patterns have evolved within this area. Despite the intense residential and industrial development around Uxbridge, the linear open space corridors that follow the River Colne, Grand Union Canal and

the lakes that they support are dominant landscape features. The waterways and lakes are typically bordered by marginal wetland vegetation and wooded areas.'

2.3.4 The assessment describes the riparian habitats alongside the river and also the woodland of the Harefield Chalk Pit, but those characteristics are not evident in the area immediately around the site, and although the site does lie close to the Colne Valley, the presence or influence of the river is not apparent in the area immediately around the site, which is visually separated from the river, enclosed and partly developed, with dense woodland to its east and south.

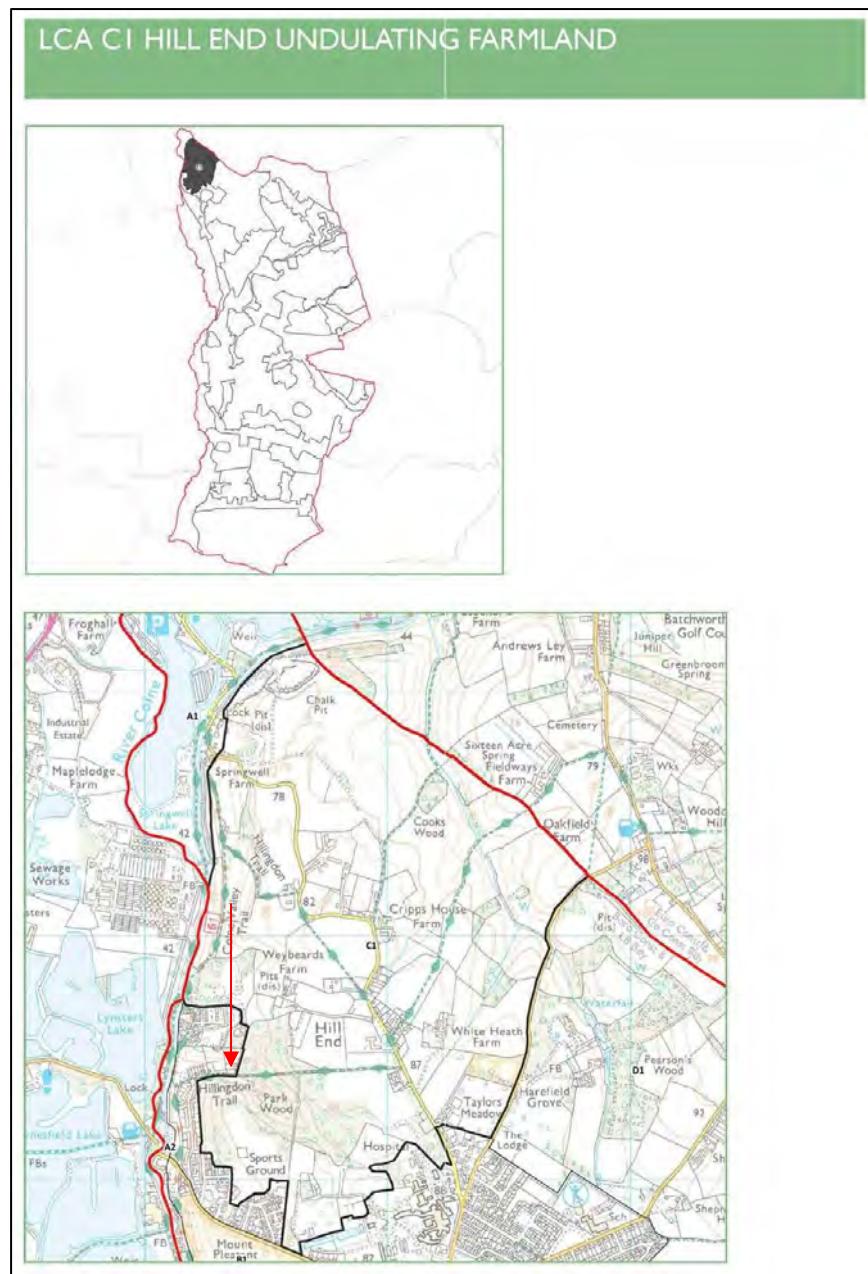
Borough Landscape Character

2.3.5 LBH have produced the Hillingdon Landscape Character Assessment (2012), which divides the Borough's landscape into a series of landscape character types and areas. It also differentiates between the landscape of the largely undeveloped areas and the urban, developed areas, which are categorised into townscape character types. The assessment places the site within the 'Inter-war Suburb/ Metroland' townscape character type, and does not assess it as being within a landscape character area. The areas immediately to the east and south of the site are shown as being within landscape character area C1, the 'Hill End Undulating Farmland'. An extract from the assessment is shown on the following page, with the location of the site indicated by the addition of a red arrow.

2.3.6 The Inter-war Suburb/ Metroland townscape character type includes most of the residential areas of the Borough, and is described briefly as '*Medium density residential suburbs*', with '*suburban style semi-detached two storey houses in pebbledash or colour render*'.

2.3.7 The description for the adjacent Hill End Undulating Farmland landscape character area includes the following:

'A gently undulating small scale farmland landscape elevated and steeply rising above the Colne Valley to the west. Fields of rough grazing and paddocks are typically delineated by hedgerows and wooden fences. The network of native hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees provide important wildlife habitats in this agricultural landscape. Old Park Wood, recognised as a SSSI supports a range of woodland types, and generates a strong sense of enclosure in the south west.'



Extract from the Hillingdon Landscape Character Assessment, showing the location of the site as within the townscape, and not considered as part of the Borough's landscape.

2.3.8 One of the listed 'Landscape and Visual Sensitivities' for the character area is '*The relatively low density of settlement which would be vulnerable to further expansion and over development*'. However, that applies to the landscape character area to the east and south of the site, and the assessment regards the site itself as part of the already developed townscape.

2.3.9 It can be seen from the above that the area of and immediately around the site is not typical of either the adjacent landscape character area (as it is enclosed and partially developed, with no agricultural land visible from the site) or of the townscape character type within which the assessment places it (as it contains some low density housing, but does not have a fully suburban character).

Local Landscape Character

2.3.10 Within the above broad assessments of landscape character, it is also useful to consider the character of the site and its immediate surroundings, as that would be the area potentially affected by the development proposals (as broadly indicated by the extent of the visual envelope shown in Figure 3), and because (as noted above) the published assessments are generalised and not site-specific, and do not fully reflect the local character.

2.3.11 The site is outside the settlement boundary in planning terms and within the Green Belt, but it does not have a rural character. The site comprises previously developed land and contains two large buildings and extensive areas of hardstanding, and adjoins existing residential areas to the west. It is enclosed by woodland to the east and south, and the paddocks to its immediate north and north west are disused and have a somewhat urban fringe character. The site and immediate surroundings therefore have an enclosed, generally edge of settlement character, and that is reflected in the fact that the Hillingdon Landscape Character Assessment regards the area as having a townscape, rather than a landscape character.

2.4 Landscape Quality, Value and Sensitivity

Landscape Designations

2.4.1 The site is not subject to any designations for landscape quality at the national or local level, but as noted above it does lie within the Green Belt - this is a planning rather than a landscape quality designation, and is intended to keep land permanently open and free from further built development, as well as avoiding the merging of settlements and encroachment into the countryside. The site is already developed, and comprises previously developed land in planning terms.

Landscape Quality and Value

2.4.2 Using the definitions set out in Appendix A, the quality and value of the landscape of and around the site have been assessed as part of the preparation of this report and the area has been judged to be of **medium quality**, as there are some positive elements (chiefly the SSSI woodland to the east and south of the site, and the canal and river valley further to the west), some neutral features (the residential areas to the west are moderately attractive but have no particular qualities) and some negative elements (the utilitarian buildings within the site, the chain link fencing around it and the extensive areas of hardstanding).

2.4.3 As noted in Appendix A, the concept of landscape value is also important, and is included in assessments in order to avoid consideration only of how scenically attractive an area may be, and thus to avoid undervaluing areas of strong character but limited visual quality. Factors such as cultural association, recreational use and intangible qualities such as cultural associations or wildness can be important in terms of determining landscape value, and have some applicability to the site in the form of the adjacent Hillingdon Trail and the nature conservation value of the woodland, but do not apply to the site itself, which is therefore of **medium** landscape value, in line with its quality.

Landscape Sensitivity

2.4.4 For assessments of potential landscape effects, sensitivity is judged according to the type of development proposed, and relates to the susceptibility of the landscape to change and also to its value, as set out in Table 5 of Appendix A. In this case the site lies in an area regarded by the Borough landscape assessment as having a townscape, rather than a landscape, character, the development would be within an area of previously developed land, with (as set out in Section 3 below) a decrease in the footprint and volume of built development, and the site is well contained by existing development to the west and topography and woodland in other directions, such that the development would have very limited visibility from the surrounding area. Any views of the new dwellings on the site would replace existing views of the generally utilitarian and unattractive (and also larger) existing buildings on the site.

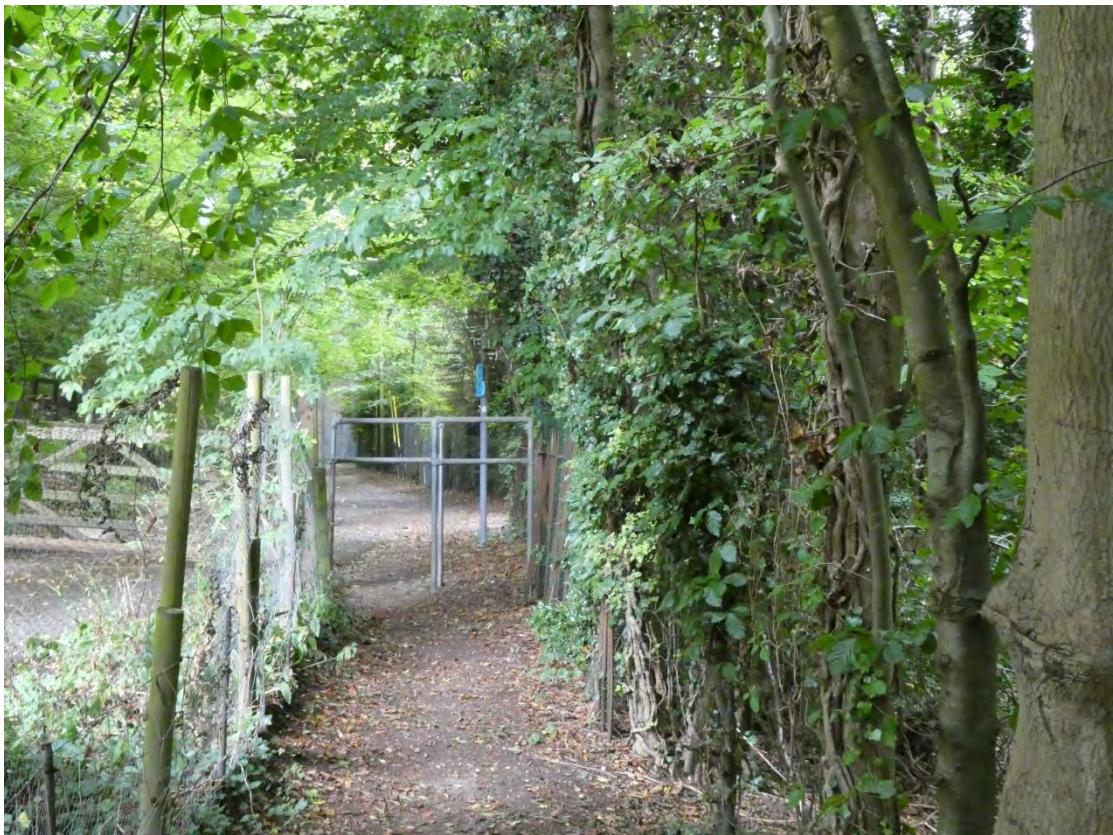
2.4.5 The sensitivity of the site and surrounding area to the proposed development has therefore been assessed as **low**, as the local area would be of low susceptibility to the proposed change - there would be an overall reduction in the volume and footprint of

built development, a decrease in the overall extent of hardstanding, and a significant improvement in the architectural quality and materials of the buildings on the site.

2.5 Visibility

2.5.1 Visibility of the site in its current form is limited by the existing houses and trees to its west, by the rising ground and trees to the north, and by the dense adjacent woodland to the east and south. The main areas from which the site is presently visible are summarised below:

- From the north there are some views from the paddocks just to the north of the site, though there is no public access to those areas. Views from any further to the north are screened by the woodland beyond the paddocks (see Photograph 16).
- From the east there are some filtered views from the edge of the woodland, though again there is no public access to that part of the wider Park Wood. There are no views from the isolated property within the woodland to the south east, which is well screened by intervening trees (see Photograph 20).
- From the south there are some short distance views from the Hillingdon Trail as it passes the site, filtered through the line of trees along the southern site boundary, and through the chain link boundary fence (see Photographs 7 to 10). There are no views from any further to the south within the woodland, as they are screened by the generally dense tree cover.
- From the west there are some views from the adjoining curtilage of Chandigrah, though views from the house itself are largely screened by intervening evergreen trees (see Photographs 2, 11, 14 and 21), and the clearest views are along the existing access from the southern, higher part of the drive to Chandigrah (see Photograph 15). There are no significant views from the properties further to the west along Bellevue Terrace, as they are screened by Chandigrah and trees within and around its curtilage. There are some partial and narrow views towards the site from Bellevue Terrace as it approaches the site from the west (see Photographs 22 and 23), and also some filtered views (mainly in the winter) from the parking areas on the lower-lying land to the north of the Bellevue Terrace houses. There are no views from any further to the west, and no views from Summerhouse Lane or the areas alongside the Grand Union Canal, or from Barrington Drive to the south west (see Photographs 24 to 26).



20. View west along the line of the Hillingdon Trail public footpath just to the south east of the site - the chain link fence along the southern site boundary can be seen through the pedestrian barriers, but there are no views to the site itself. The field gate leading to the isolated property to the south east of the site can be seen on the left of the view, and that property is behind and to the left of the viewpoint. September 2023.



21. View west from the north western part of the site, showing the garage to Chandigrah in the centre of the view and the house on the left, visible through the intervening trees. There would be some views to the new dwellings on the site from this property and its curtilage, but no significant views for the properties further to the west, which cannot be seen in this view. Two images combined, September 2023.



22. View east along Bellevue Terrace, with Chandigrah just visible through the trees on the left of the view. The western end of Barn 1 can just be seen between the trees where indicated by the red arrow. September 2023.



23. View east from further to the west along Bellevue Terrace - there are no views to the site. September 2023.



24. View east along Bellevue Terrace from its junction with Summerhouse Lane - there are no views to the site. September 2023.



25. View east to the junction of Bellevue Terrace with Summerhouse Lane from the western side of the Grand Union Canal - there are no views to the site. September 2023.



26. View north east in the direction of the site from Barrington Drive - the site is roughly in the centre of the view but is well screened by the intervening higher ground, trees and houses. Two images combined, September 2023.

2.6 Relevant Planning Context

National Planning Policy

2.6.1 The Government's national planning policy and guidance on various aspects of planning are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, updated in July 2021). The NPPF states that '*the purpose of planning is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development*', and that in order to do so, the planning system must perform mutually dependent economic, social and environmental roles.

2.6.2 Paragraph 130 of the NPPF states (in part) that:

'Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit.'

2.6.3 Green Belts are a planning rather than a landscape designation, and are not designated according to the quality of the landscape concerned, but are intended to keep land open (or prevent it becoming less open, where development already exists). Government policy on Green Belts is set out in the NPPF, which states in paragraph 137 that:

'The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.'

2.6.4 In paragraph 138 the NPPF goes on to state that the five purposes of Green Belts are:

- 'to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.'

2.6.5 Paragraphs 147 and 148 go on to state:

'Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.'

'When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.'

2.6.6 Paragraph 149 of the NPPF states that 'A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt', except in certain circumstances, which include (as set out in sub-paragraph g):

'limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:

– not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development’.

2.6.7 Although the Green Belt is a planning rather than a landscape designation, the Court of Appeal held in *Turner v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* [2016] EWCA Civ 466 that the concept of Green Belt openness has a visual as well as a spatial dimension. Paragraphs 14 to 16 of the Judgement set out the reasoning for this:

- ‘14. *The concept of “openness of the Green Belt” is not narrowly limited to the volumetric approach suggested by Mr Rudd. The word “openness” is open-textured and a number of factors are capable of being relevant when it comes to applying it to the particular facts of a specific case. Prominent among these will be factors relevant to how built up the Green Belt is now and how built up it would be if redevelopment occurs (in the context of which, volumetric matters may be a material concern, but are by no means the only one) and factors relevant to the visual impact on the aspect of openness which the Green Belt presents.*
15. *The question of visual impact is implicitly part of the concept of “openness of the Green Belt” as a matter of the natural meaning of the language used in para. 89 of the NPPF. I consider that this interpretation is also reinforced by the general guidance in paras. 79-81 of the NPPF, which introduce section 9 on the protection of Green Belt Land. There is an important visual dimension to checking “the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas” and the merging of neighbouring towns, as indeed the name “Green Belt” itself implies. Greenness is a visual quality: part of the idea of the Green Belt is that the eye and the spirit should be relieved from the prospect of unrelenting urban sprawl. Openness of aspect is a characteristic quality of the countryside, and “safeguarding the countryside from encroachment” includes preservation of that quality of openness. The preservation of “the setting … of historic towns” obviously refers in a material way to their visual setting, for instance when seen from a distance across open fields. Again, the reference in para. 81 to planning positively “to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity” in the Green Belt makes it clear that the visual dimension of the Green Belt is an important part of the point of designating land as Green Belt.*
16. *The visual dimension of the openness of the Green Belt does not exhaust all relevant planning factors relating to visual impact when a proposal for development in the Green Belt comes up for consideration. For example, there may be harm to visual amenity for neighbouring properties arising from the proposed development which needs to be taken into account as well. But it does not follow from the fact that there may be other harms with a visual dimension apart from harm to the openness of the Green Belt that the concept of openness of the Green Belt has no visual dimension itself.’*

2.6.8 This judgement stresses that the openness of the Green Belt is not just about the volume of built development, but also has an important visual dimension, and a

Supreme Court case in 2020 (*Samuel Smith Old Brewery (Tadcaster) v North Yorkshire County Council* - 2020 UKSC 3) qualified the previous judgement but still held that visual matters could be taken into account as a matter of planning judgement.

2.6.9 Paragraph 174 of the NPPF states (in part) that:

'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- 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);*
- 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;*
- d) *minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures'.*

2.6.10 The wording '*in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan*' in Paragraph 174a) shows that firstly landscapes which have an identified quality in the development plan should usually be regarded as valued, and secondly that the protection to be afforded to valued landscapes will vary with their status, with statutorily protected landscapes (Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks) receiving the highest level of protection, and landscapes recognised and protected by development plan policies protected at a lower level, but still above that of ordinary countryside. As the site and surrounding area are not designated for landscape quality at any scale, the area should not be regarded as a valued landscape in the terms of Paragraph 174 of the NPPF.

2.6.11 The supporting Planning Practice Guidance to the NPPF (Paragraph 036 Reference ID: 8-036-20190721) states that:

'The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that plans should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and that strategic policies should provide for the conservation and enhancement of landscapes. This can include nationally and locally-designated landscapes but also the wider countryside.'

London Planning Policy

2.6.12 The London Plan 2021 contains the following relevant policies:

- Policy D1 - London's form, character and capacity for growth, which states that Boroughs should '*undertake area assessments to define the characteristics, qualities and value of different places within the plan area to develop an understanding of different areas' capacity for growth*', and follow the '*design-led approach (set out in Policy D3 Optimising site capacity through the design-led approach) to establish optimised site capacities for site allocations*'.

The supporting text to the policy notes in paragraph 3.1.7 that change can be positive:

'As change is a fundamental characteristic of London, respecting character and accommodating change should not be seen as mutually exclusive. Understanding of the character of a place should not seek to preserve things in a static way but should ensure an appropriate balance is struck between existing fabric and any proposed change. Opportunities for change and transformation, through new building forms and typologies, should be informed by an understanding of a place's distinctive character, recognising that not all elements of a place are special and valued.'

- Policy D3 - Optimising site capacity through the design-led approach, which states (in part):

'The design-led approach

A All development must make the best use of land by following a design-led approach that optimises the capacity of sites, including site allocations. Optimising site capacity means ensuring that development is of the most appropriate form and land use for the site. The design-led approach requires consideration of design options to determine the most appropriate form of development that responds to a site's context and capacity for growth, and existing and planned supporting infrastructure capacity (as set out in Policy D2 Infrastructure requirements for sustainable densities), and that best delivers the requirements set out in Part D.

B Higher density developments should generally be promoted in locations that are well connected to jobs, services, infrastructure and amenities by public transport, walking and cycling, in accordance with Policy D2 Infrastructure requirements for sustainable densities. Where these locations have existing areas of high density buildings, expansion of the areas should be positively

considered by Boroughs where appropriate. This could also include expanding Opportunity Area boundaries where appropriate.

C *In other areas, incremental densification should be actively encouraged by Boroughs to achieve a change in densities in the most appropriate way. This should be interpreted in the context of Policy H2 Small sites.*

- Policy D4 - Delivering good design, which seeks to achieve high quality designs and place-making.
- Policy G2 London's Green Belt, which seeks to protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development.

Local Planning Policy

2.6.13 The LBH Local Plan Part 1: Strategic Polices was adopted in 2012, and contains the following relevant policies:

- Policy BE1: Built Environment, which seeks to maintain and improve the quality of the built environment, achieve a high quality of design and to achieve development which is appropriate the Borough's townscapes and landscapes.
- Policy EM2: Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land and Green Chains, which seeks to maintain the current extent and functions of such areas, noting that any proposed development will be assessed against national and London Plan policies.

2.6.14 The LBH Local Plan Part 2 is itself in two parts and the Development Management Polices and Site Allocations and Designations documents were adopted in 2020, and contain the following relevant policies:

- Policy DMHB 11: Design of New Development, which seeks to achieve high quality design '*harmonising with the local context*'.
- Policy DMHB 12: Streets and Public Realm, which states that new development should be well integrated with the surrounding area, take account

of established townscape character and quality and ‘*include landscaping treatment that is suitable for the location*’.

- Policy DMHB 14: Trees and Landscaping, which states that ‘*developments will be expected to retain or enhance existing landscaping, trees, biodiversity or other natural features of merit*’, that proposals should include appropriate hard and soft landscaping and that developments:

‘that would affect existing trees will be required to provide an accurate tree survey showing the location, height, spread and species of trees. Where the tree survey identifies trees of merit, tree root protection areas and an arboricultural method statement will be required to show how the trees will be protected. Where trees are to be removed, proposals for replanting of new trees on-site must be provided or include contributions to offsite provision.’

- Policy DMEI 4: Development in the Green Belt or on Metropolitan Open Land, which reiterates national Green Belt policy and notes that judgements as to effects on the openness of the Green Belt will have regard to:

- i) *the height and bulk of the existing building on the site;*
- ii) *the proportion of the site that is already developed;*
- iii) *the footprint, distribution and character of the existing buildings on the site;*
- iv) *the relationship of the proposal with any development on the site that is to be retained; and*
- v) *the visual amenity and character of the Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land.’*

3. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 General

3.1.1 The proposals are for the redevelopment of the site, involving the removal of the existing buildings and areas of hardstanding to create 4 new dwellings, together with associated access and landscape proposals.

3.1.2 The background to and development of the proposals are set out in the Design and Access Statement (DAS) which accompanies the planning application, and the proposals are shown on the architect's drawings (the Proposed Site (Block) Plan and Proposed Coloured Front Elevation - Unit 1 drawings are included in Appendix B to this report for ease of reference). The main elements of the proposed development which are relevant to this assessment are:

- The existing buildings would be demolished and the existing areas of hardstanding would be excavated, with all materials removed from site (apart from any which may be recycled as part of the new construction).
- There would be 4 new, two storey dwellings of a contemporary design, with flat roofs (see the elevation drawing in Appendix B). The new dwellings would all be located within parts of the site which are presently occupied by either the existing buildings or areas of concrete hardstanding - there would be no built development on the parts of the site which are presently grassed.
- The buildings would be of high quality in terms of their design and materials, with elevations of off-white render and timber cladding, powder coated aluminium windows and green roofs comprising sedum or similar species.
- The existing access would be closed up and replaced with a new access (with provision for vehicle turning) further to the east. The new dwellings would be arranged around a new internal access with a turning head.
- As set out in more detail in the DAS, the proposals would lead to a reduction of 7.7% in the overall volume of built development on the site and a reduction of 34.5% in the footprint of built development, while the gross external floor area would remain the same. There would also be a significant reduction of 35.5% in the overall area of external hardstanding.

- The new dwellings would be slightly taller than the existing barns (5.5m to their flat roofs, as opposed to around 5m to the ridge of the barns), but that would be offset by the reductions in footprint and volume, the fact that the site is set down below adjacent levels to the north, east and south, and by the generally low level of visibility of the site. The AOD heights of the new flat roofs would also be no higher than the ridge height of Barn 1, at 60.3m AOD.
- The existing unsightly chain link perimeter fencing would be removed and replaced with lower timber post and rail fencing with a native species hedge running alongside it, providing a softer and more appropriate boundary.
- As set out in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment report, most of the trees within and around the site are of poor quality with a limited future life span, and some of the ash trees are suffering from die-back. The proposals therefore involve the removal of many of these trees, including the poor quality ash trees along the northern boundary and the line of conifers (which appears to be an overgrown hedge) at the top of the bank along the southern site boundary. Most of the tree removal is for arboricultural/ landscape reasons rather than to make room for the new dwellings, which would be constructed on areas of the site which are presently occupied by either the existing buildings or areas of hardstanding. There would be extensive new and replacement planting of mainly native species trees and hedges, as set out below

3.2 Landscape Proposals

3.2.1 There are no firm or detailed landscape proposals for the development at this stage, but the Proposed Site (Block) Plan submitted with the application indicates the elements summarised below, and for the purposes of this assessment it has been assumed that the landscape proposals for the site would be as indicated on this drawing and as described below (noting that the final proposals would be subject to approval by LBH as part of an appropriate condition):

- While some of the existing trees within and around the site would be removed due to their poor quality and limited lifespan, others would be retained, as indicated on the Proposed Site (Block) Plan, and the site would continue to be generally well screened by existing vegetation, including the woodland to the east and south.

- The site perimeter and external boundaries to the new rear gardens would be marked with a 1.2m high timber post and rail fence with a native species hedge planted alongside the fence line to form the longer term boundary, together with some intermittent native trees (such as field maple, hornbeam or wild cherry). This low key boundary treatment is proposed as being more appropriate to the site's semi-rural context than taller closeboard fencing.
- New native species trees would be planted to either side of the new access, along the northern and southern site boundaries and around the new houses where space permits.
- The majority of the planting would be of locally appropriate native species, with any failures replaced for a period of five years. More ornamental species offering greater year round colour and interest would be used within the overall native species framework, closer to the new houses.

4. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

4.1 General

4.1.1 Before considering the likely landscape and visual effects of the proposed development, it is relevant to note the following important characteristics of both it and the surrounding landscape:

- The site has limited visibility from the surrounding area, with some short distance but filtered views from the Hillingdon Trail public footpath to the south, partial and narrow views towards the site from Bellevue Terrace as it approaches the site from the west, but no significant public views from any other directions.
- The site is already developed, and constitutes previously developed land in planning terms.
- The existing buildings on the site are large in size and generally poor in terms of their architectural quality and materials, and the site contains extensive areas of concrete hardstanding.
- The development would result in an overall reduction in the volume and footprint of built development on the site, a reduction in the areas of hard surfacing and a significant improvement in the architectural quality and materials of the buildings on the site. The new dwellings would be marginally taller than the existing barns, but the overall quantum of built development on the site would reduce.
- Where the new dwellings are visible, they would replace the existing buildings on the site in such views, and would therefore represent an overall improvement in landscape and visual terms.
- The site and surrounds are of medium quality and value in landscape terms, and low sensitivity to development of the type proposed.
- However, while there would be some significant beneficial aspects to the proposals, the site is in the countryside in planning terms and also in the Green Belt, and the addition of the new dwellings could potentially lead to some

adverse landscape or visual effects, or harm to the openness of the Green Belt
- those matters are considered below.

4.2 Landscape and Visual Effects

Views of the Development

4.2.1 The current visibility of the site and existing buildings is described in Section 2.5 above. The redevelopment of the site to provide 4 new dwellings would not in principle increase that degree of visibility, as the site is generally well screened and the new dwellings would not be significantly taller than the existing buildings on the site, and would have a smaller overall footprint and volume. The areas from which the proposed development would be visible would therefore in general be very similar to those described above for the existing site, and would be as follow:

- From the north there would be no views from any publicly accessible areas.
- From the east there would be some filtered views from the edge of the woodland, but there is no public access to that part of the wider Park Wood.
- From the south there would be some short distance views from the Hillingdon Trail as it passes the site, above the proposed native species hedge along the southern site boundary, until it grows up to screen those views. The new Unit 1 dwelling would be visible, but would be slightly further away than the existing Barn 2, and would occupy a smaller proportion of the view. There would also be clear and short distance views of the new access, but the view from the footpath would in general be improved, as a result of the removal of the poor quality chain link fence and line of spindly conifers which directly adjoin the footpath. There would be no views from any further to the south within the woodland, as they would be screened by the generally dense tree cover.
- From the west there would be some views from the adjoining curtilage of Chandigrah, though views from the house itself would be largely screened by the retained evergreen trees. There would be no significant views from the properties further to the west along Bellevue Terrace, as they are screened by Chandigrah and trees within and around its curtilage, but there would be some partial and narrow views from Bellevue Terrace as it approaches the site from the west, and also some filtered views (mainly in the winter) from the parking areas on the lower-lying land to the north of the Bellevue Terrace houses - the

new dwellings would be partially visible in some of these views, replacing the existing barns in the view.

4.2.2 In summary, the new dwellings would be visible from a very limited area only around the site, with the main area of visibility being from a short section of the Hillingdon Trail as it passes the site to the south. Where visible, the new dwellings would replace the existing buildings on the site in the view, and (together with the removal of the hardstanding and boundary chain link fence) this would represent an overall improvement in visual terms.

Landscape Change

4.2.3 Bearing the above in mind, the degree of change to the local landscape brought about by the proposed development would be **low in terms of magnitude and generally beneficial in nature**. The appearance of the site itself would change significantly, but that change would have limited visibility from the area around the site. The completed development would have a residential character as opposed to the somewhat rundown, edge of settlement existing character, but that more residential character would be experienced within an area which the Hillingdon Landscape Character Assessment considers to already have a townscape (rather than a landscape) character. The new dwellings would represent an improvement in the architectural quality and materials of the buildings on the site, and the proposals would also result in an overall reduction in the volume and footprint of built development and a decrease also in the overall extent of hardstanding, and therefore a localised increase in the openness of the Green Belt.

4.2.4 The fact that the change would in principle be beneficial can be appreciated by considering a hypothetical opposite development - if there were 4 well-designed dwellings on the site at the moment and the proposal was to replace them with a greater footprint and volume of utilitarian buildings constructed from mostly poor quality materials, with a much larger area of hardstanding around them, then such a proposal would be (rightly) resisted by LBH as causing landscape and visual harm, and harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

Landscape Effects

4.2.5 The landscape of and around the site has been assessed as of low sensitivity to development of the type proposed, and the degree of change brought about by the development would be low in magnitude, and on balance beneficial in nature. With reference to the criteria set out in Appendix A, the anticipated overall effects on the

local landscape would therefore be **slight, but beneficial**. This is because any effects in terms of change to a more residential character would be more than balanced by the reduced quantum of built development, by the generally improved design quality and materials of the buildings and by the generally improved appearance of the site as a whole. The overall character of the local landscape would not change to any significant degree, but what change there is would on balance be beneficial, and the completed development would not appear incongruous within this edge of settlement area.

4.2.6 The effects noted above would be felt over a very limited area around the site, as indicated by the visual envelope shown on Figure 3. They are also those which would be experienced in the winter - effects in the summer would be at a similar level, but experienced over a more limited area as a result of the increased screening effect of the (mainly deciduous) vegetation in the area around the site. The above effects are also those which would be experienced on completion of the development, and the effects would become gradually more beneficial over time, as the proposed planting matures and the new dwellings are progressively integrated into the surrounding area.

Visual Effects

4.2.7 Landscape effects are those affecting the landscape as a resource, while visual effects are those affecting a specific visual receptor. Visual receptors are normally taken to be people in their homes or in publicly accessible points, or moving along public highways or footpaths. Effects on receptors around the site would be as set out below:

- A. Properties to the west. There would be some filtered views from the adjoining curtilage of Chandigrah, though views from the house itself would be largely screened by the retained evergreen trees. The new dwellings would replace the existing buildings in the view, and the degree of change in the winter for this property of medium visual sensitivity would be low, leading to **slight to moderate visual effects**, which would on balance be **beneficial** in nature. There would be no significant views, and no effects, for the properties further to the west along Bellevue Terrace, as they are screened from the site by Chandigrah and trees within and around its curtilage.

- B. Users of Public Rights of Way. There would be some short distance views of the new dwellings and also the new access from a short section of the Hillingdon Trail as it passes the site, above the proposed native species hedge along the southern site boundary, until it grows up to screen those views. The view from the footpath would change, but would in general be



Approximate extent of visual envelope



Photograph viewpoint and direction of view

See Figure 2 for remaining viewpoints

CHANDIGRAH, SUMMERHOUSE LANE, HAREFIELD

Landscape and Visual Assessment

Not to Scale

Jon Etchells Consulting

Figure 3 Visual Envelope and Photograph Viewpoints

improved, as a result of the removal of the poor quality chain link fence and line of spindly conifers which directly adjoin the footpath, and the well-designed dwellings replacing the existing poor quality buildings in the view. There would be a medium degree of change for receptors of medium sensitivity, resulting in **moderate visual effects**, which would again on balance be **beneficial**.

C. Users of local roads. There would be some partial and narrow views from Bellevue Terrace as it approaches the site from the west, and the change in these views would be negligible but generally positive, resulting in **insignificant but beneficial visual effects**.

4.2.8 As noted above for landscape effects, the above effects are those which would be experienced in the winter, and for some of the viewpoints the visibility (and hence the level of effects) would be reduced in the summer. The above effects are also those which would be experienced on completion of the development, and the effects would become gradually more beneficial over time, as the proposed planting matures and the new dwellings are progressively integrated into the surrounding area.

4.2.9 In summary, any visual effects within the area around the site would tend to be beneficial, as the new dwellings would in general occupy a smaller proportion of the view than the existing buildings, and would also be better designed and constructed from higher quality materials, with improvements also in the boundary treatment and general appearance of the site. The visibility of the development would be limited, and in terms of the overall visual amenity of the area around the site any effects would be generally **insignificant but on balance positive in nature**, for the same reasons as set out above.

4.3 Effects During Construction

4.3.1 The above assessment of effects has been of the completed development. There may also be some additional effects during the demolition and construction stages arising from the presence of construction plant and equipment and also because partly constructed buildings can appear more unsightly than completed ones, but any such effects would be experienced for a short time only.

4.4 Effects in Relation to Policy

4.4.1 In respect of the range of national policies described in Section 2.6 above which seek to protect the landscape, this assessment has indicated that there would be generally beneficial effects on local landscape character, so there would therefore be **no conflict** with the relevant national policies.

4.4.2 For the same reasons there would also be **no conflict** with the general design policies of The London Plan.

4.4.3 In terms of Local Plan Policies BE1 and DMHB 11, the design is of a high quality and has been carefully considered in relation to the local context. In terms of Policies DMHB 12 and 14 the proposals include landscape treatment appropriate to the location and retain existing trees where they are in reasonably good condition, and a detailed Arboricultural Impact Assessment report has been prepared as part of the planning submission. The assessment in this report is that any effects on the surrounding landscape would be generally beneficial, so there would be no harm in terms of the qualities and character of the surrounding area, and **no conflict** with these policies.

4.4.4 In relation to national and local policy on the Green Belt, there would be no conflict with Green Belt policy as set out in the NPPF (and the Local Plan), as the development is one of the categories covered by Paragraph 149 g), the redevelopment of previously developed land, and is therefore appropriate development, provided it does '*not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development*'. There is no clear definition in the NPPF as to how openness should be assessed, particularly relative openness between two different forms of development, but there could be three approaches - the amount of Green Belt land occupied by the development in a cartographic sense (i.e. its footprint), the amount of space it physically occupies (i.e. its volume) and how it appears within the Green Belt (i.e. how it affects the visual perception of openness).

4.4.5 The proposals in this case would be beneficial in each respect - the overall development footprint and volume would both decrease, and the general appearance of the site, in terms of the overall quantum of built development and also the quality of the design and materials of the buildings would be improved. There would therefore be **no conflict with Green Belt policy**, and the proposals would be appropriate development within the Green Belt.

4.4.6 There would be no adverse effects in terms of the five purposes of including land within Green Belts, as set out below:

- There would be no harm in terms of the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas, as the site is already developed, and the extent of built footprint would be reduced.
- There would be no harm in respect of neighbouring towns merging into one another, as again the site is already developed and the footprint would be reduced.
- There would be no harm in terms of safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, for the same reasons.
- There would be no harm in terms of the setting and special character of historic towns as no such town is present in the area around the site.
- There would be some benefits in terms of encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land - the site is within the countryside in planning terms, but it is not in active use, and is previously developed land.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 This report has been prepared in connection with the proposed redevelopment of land to the east of the detached residential property of 'Chandigrah', which is at the eastern end of Bellevue Terrace, off Summerhouse Lane, Harefield. The proposals involve the demolition of the existing disused equestrian storage buildings and their replacement with 4 new dwellings, together with associated access and landscape proposals.

5.2 The site comprises a former equestrian yard, with access via a hard surfaced track from the end of Bellevue Terrace and extensive areas of concrete hardstanding and two barns, which are large utilitarian, agricultural-style structures.

5.3 The site falls within the area of the London Borough of Hillingdon (LBH), and a planning application for the proposed development is to be submitted to LBH. The site is in the countryside in planning terms but is not (and has not recently been) in agricultural use. Its most recent use was equestrian, but the site is presently disused - a Certificate of Lawfulness dated 23 January 2023 confirmed that the lawful use of the land is equestrian, and the land therefore comprises previously developed land in planning terms. The site is outside the settlement boundary and in the Green Belt, but the proposals would result in a reduction in both the footprint and volume of built development on the site, and would also reduce the area of hardstanding - as the site comprises previously developed land, the proposed development would therefore in principle represent appropriate development in the Green Belt.

5.4 The site is in the countryside in planning terms, but it does not have a rural character. It comprises previously developed land and contains two large buildings and extensive areas of hardstanding, and adjoins existing residential areas to the west. It is enclosed by woodland to the east and south, and the paddocks to its immediate north and north west are disused and have a somewhat urban fringe character. The site and immediate surroundings therefore have an enclosed, generally edge of settlement character.

5.5 The site has limited visibility from the surrounding area, with some short distance but filtered views from the Hillingdon Trail public footpath to the south, partial and narrow views towards the site from Bellevue Terrace as it approaches the site from the west, but no significant public views from any other directions.

5.6 There are no designations for landscape quality affecting the area of and immediately around the site, and the sensitivity of the site and surrounding area to the proposed development has been assessed as low, as the local area would be of low susceptibility to the proposed change - there would be an overall reduction in the volume and footprint of built development, a decrease in the overall extent of hardstanding, and a significant improvement in the architectural quality and materials of the buildings on the site.

5.7 The proposals are for 4 new, two storey dwellings of a contemporary design, with flat roofs. The new dwellings would all be located within parts of the site which are presently occupied by either the existing buildings or areas of concrete hardstanding - there would be no built development on the parts of the site which are presently grassed. The new dwellings would be slightly taller than the existing barns (5.5m to their flat roofs, as opposed to around 5m to the ridge of the barns), but that would be offset by the reductions in footprint and volume, the fact that the site is set down below adjacent levels to the north, east and south, and by the generally low level of visibility of the site. The existing unsightly chain link perimeter fencing would be removed and replaced with lower timber post and rail fencing with a native species hedge running alongside it, providing a softer and more appropriate boundary.

5.8 The degree of change to the local landscape brought about by the proposed development would be low in terms of magnitude and generally beneficial in nature. The appearance of the site itself would change significantly, but that change would have limited visibility from the area around the site. The completed development would have a residential character as opposed to the somewhat run-down, edge of settlement existing character, but that more residential character would be experienced within an area which the Hillingdon Landscape Character Assessment considers to already have a townscape (rather than a landscape) character. The new dwellings would represent an improvement in the architectural quality and materials of the buildings on the site, and the proposals would also result in an overall reduction in the volume and footprint of built development and a decrease also in the overall extent of hardstanding, and therefore a localised increase in the openness of the Green Belt.

5.9 The anticipated overall effects on the local landscape would be slight, but beneficial. This is because any effects in terms of change to a more residential character would be more than balanced by the reduced quantum of built development, by the generally improved design quality and materials of the buildings and by the generally improved appearance of the site as a whole. The overall character of the local landscape would not change to any significant degree, but what change there is would on balance be

beneficial, and the completed development would not appear incongruous within this edge of settlement area.

5.10 Any visual effects within the area around the site would tend to be beneficial, as the new dwellings would in general occupy a smaller proportion of the view than the existing buildings, and would also be better designed and constructed from higher quality materials, with improvements also in the boundary treatment and general appearance of the site.

5.11 As there would be no harm (and in fact some localised benefits) in landscape and visual terms, there would be no conflict with relevant landscape-related national or local policies. In relation to national and local policy on the Green Belt, there would be no conflict with Green Belt policy as set out in the NPPF, as the development is one of the categories covered by Paragraph 149 g), the redevelopment of previously developed land, and is therefore appropriate development, provided it does '*not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development*'. The proposals would be beneficial in terms of openness - the overall development footprint and volume would both decrease, and the general appearance of the site, in terms of the overall quantum of built development and also the quality of the design and materials of the buildings would be improved. There would therefore be no conflict with Green Belt policy, and the proposals would be appropriate development within the Green Belt.

APPENDIX A ~ Methodology

1 General

- 1.1 In landscape and visual assessments, a distinction is normally drawn between landscape effects (i.e. effects on the character or quality of the landscape, irrespective of whether there are any views of the landscape, or viewers to see them) and visual effects (i.e. effects on people's views of the landscape, principally from residential properties, but also from public rights of way and other areas with public access). Thus, a development may have extensive landscape effects but few visual effects (if, for example, there are no properties or public viewpoints), or few landscape effects but significant visual effects (if, for example, the landscape is already degraded or the development is not out of character with it, but can clearly be seen from many residential properties).
- 1.2 The core methodology followed is that set out in the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', produced jointly by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and the Landscape Institute ('the GLVIA', 1995, revised 2002 and 2013). The document 'Landscape Character Assessment, Guidance for England and Scotland, 2002' (The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage) also stresses the need for a holistic assessment of landscape character, including physical, biological and social factors. This document notes that '*Landscape is about the relationship between people and place.*'
- 1.3 Further information is set out in 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment', October 2014 (Christine Tudor, Natural England) to which reference is also made. This paper notes that 'Landscape' is defined in the European Landscape Convention as: '*Landscape is an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.*'
- 1.4 The GLVIA guidance is on the principles and process of assessment, and stresses that the detailed approach adopted should be appropriate to the task in hand. It notes that professional judgement is at the core of LVIA, and that while some change can be quantified (for example the number of trees which may be lost), '*much of the assessment must rely on qualitative judgements*' (GLVIA, section 2.23), and the Landscape Institute's Technical Committee has advised that the 2013 revision of the GLVIA '*places greater emphasis on professional judgement and less emphasis on a formulaic approach*'. The judgements made as part of the assessment were based on the tables set out below.
- 1.5 Assessment of the baseline landscape was undertaken by means of a desk study of published information, including Ordnance Survey mapping and landscape character assessments at national, county and local scales.

2 Methodology for this Assessment

2.1 For the purposes of this assessment, the guidance set out above was generally adhered to, with the following specific refinements:

1. Landscape and visual effects were assessed in terms of the magnitude of the change brought about by the development (also referred to in the GLVIA as the '*nature of the effect*', though as effects are the end product of the assessment, rather than one of the inputs to it, the term change is used to avoid confusion) and also the sensitivity of the resource affected (also referred to in the GLVIA as the '*nature of the receptor*'). There is some confusion in the guidance about the term 'impact'; the overall process is known as Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, but what is actually assessed is more usually referred to as effects, and the GLVIA does also use the word 'impact' to mean the action being taken, or the magnitude of change. In order to avoid this source of confusion, this assessment does not use the word 'impact', but instead refers to the **magnitude of change** caused by the development, which results (in combination with the sensitivity of the resource affected) in landscape and visual **effects**.
2. Landscape and visual effects have been considered in terms of whether they are direct or indirect, short term/temporary or long term/permanent, and beneficial or adverse. It is also important to consider the area over which the effects may be felt, and to note that effects will generally tend to decline with distance from the development in question, so the scale at which the judgement is made will affect the level of significance of the effects.
3. The **magnitude of change** will generally decrease with distance from its source, until a point is reached where there is no discernible change. It will also vary with factors such as the scale and nature of the proposed development, the proportion of the view that would be occupied by the development, whether the view is clear and open, or partial and/or filtered, the duration and nature of the change (e.g. temporary or permanent, intermittent or continuous etc), whether the view would focus on the proposed development or whether the development would be incidental in the view, and the nature of the existing view (e.g. whether it contains existing detracting or intrusive elements).
4. In terms of **sensitivity**, residential properties were taken to be of high sensitivity in general, although this can vary with the degree of openness of their view (see Table 7 below). Landscapes which carry a landscape quality designation and which are otherwise attractive or unspoilt will in general be more sensitive, while those which are less attractive or already affected by significant visual detractors and disturbance will be generally less sensitive (see Table 4 below).
5. For both landscape and visual effects, the assessment is of the development **complete with the proposed mitigation measures**. Those measures are part of the proposed development, and there has therefore been no assessment of a hypothetical, unmitigated development. However, as the mitigation measures involve planting, they will take time to become effective, and the assessment therefore makes allowance for

this, considering an initial scenario in the winter of the first year after planting and then a future scenario where the planting has begun to mature.

6. The GLVIA suggests in section 3.32 that an assessment should distinguish between significant and non-significant effects (based on the fact that the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 require the assessment of '*direct and indirect significant effects*' on the environment). Where an assessment forms part of a wider EIA and is summarised in an Environmental Statement (ES), that judgment may be for the editor of the ES to make, but in an assessment which is not part of an EIA, it should be noted that the GLVIA makes it clear in section 3.34 that '*effects not considered to be significant will not be completely disregarded*', and therefore adverse landscape and visual effects of any level (other than no effect or negligible) should be carried forwards by the decision maker into the overall planning balance, as they still constitute harm (or benefit).

LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

7. **Landscape change** was categorised as shown in Table 1 below, where each level (other than no change) can be either beneficial or adverse:

| Table 1 ~ Magnitude of Landscape Change | |
|---|---|
| Category | Definition |
| No change | No loss or alteration of key landscape characteristics, features or elements. |
| Negligible | Very minor loss or alteration (or improvement, restoration or addition) to one or more key landscape characteristics, features or elements. |
| Low | Minor loss of or alteration (or improvement, restoration or addition) to one or more key landscape characteristics, features or elements. |
| Medium | Partial loss of or damage (or improvement, restoration or addition) to key characteristics, features or elements. |
| High | Total or widespread loss of, or severe damage (or major improvement, restoration or addition) to key characteristics, features or elements. |

8. **Landscape quality** was judged on site by an experienced assessor, with reference to the criteria shown in Table 2 below. **Landscape condition** (i.e. the physical state of the landscape, including its intactness and the condition of individual landscape elements) can have a bearing on landscape quality, as indicated.

| Table 2 ~ Criteria for Determining Landscape Quality | |
|--|--|
| Category | Typical Criteria ¹ |
| Very high quality | National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty standard - the area will usually (though not necessarily, especially for small areas) be so designated. It is also possible that some parts of designated areas may be of locally lower quality, if affected by detractors. Will generally be a landscape in good condition, with intact and distinctive elements. |
| High quality | Attractive landscape, usually with a strong sense of place, varied topography and distinctive landscape or historic features, and few visual detractors. Will generally be a landscape in good condition, with intact and distinctive elements. |
| Medium quality | Pleasant landscape with few detractors but with no particularly distinctive qualities. Will generally be a landscape in medium condition, with some intact elements. |
| Low quality | Unattractive or degraded landscape, affected by visual detractors. Will generally be a landscape in poor condition, with few intact elements. |

1. Note that the above criteria are indicators of the types of landscapes which may be judged to be of the given quality - they are not intended to be applied in full or literally in all cases.

9. The quality of the landscape is one element which goes into the consideration of **landscape value**, which also takes account of other factors, including rarity, representativeness, conservation interests, recreational value and perceptual aspects such as wildness or tranquillity - these are some of the factors listed for the consideration of landscape value in Box 5.1 of the GLVIA on its page 84.
10. Box 5.1 has come to be used as a default method for determining landscape value, and is frequently referenced. However, it should be noted that it appears in the GLVIA under the heading of 'Undesignated landscapes', and also predates the February 2019 NPPF, which states that valued landscapes should be protected and enhanced '*in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan*'. This shows that landscapes which have statutory protection (i.e. AONBs and National Parks) or an identified quality in the development plan should be regarded as valued, and secondly that the protection to be afforded to valued landscapes will vary with their status, with statutorily protected landscapes receiving the highest level of protection, and landscapes recognised and protected by development plan policies valued and protected at a lower level, but still above that of ordinary countryside. It is also often useful to include some consideration of the function that an area of landscape may have in determining its value, for example if it plays a role in the separation and setting of settlements.

11. The GLVIA considers landscape value as a measure to be assessed in association with landscape character, in order to avoid consideration only of how scenically attractive an area may be, and thus to avoid undervaluing areas of strong character but little scenic beauty. It is defined in the glossary of the GLVIA as:

'The relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society. A landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons.'

Landscape value was judged on site by an experienced assessor, with reference to the above discussion and the criteria shown in Table 3 below.

| Table 3 ~ Criteria for Determining Landscape Value | |
|--|--|
| Category | Typical Criteria ¹ |
| Very High Value | Often very high quality landscapes, usually in good condition, with intact and distinctive elements. Will often (though not necessarily, especially for small areas) be a statutorily designated landscape with strong scenic qualities. May have significant recreational value at national or regional scale and include recognised and/or popular viewpoints. May have a strong functional element, for example in providing an open gap between settlements. May also be a rare landscape type, or one with strong wildlife, cultural or other interests or connections. |
| High Value | Often high quality landscapes, usually in good condition, with some intact and distinctive elements. Will sometimes be a designated landscape with strong scenic qualities. May have significant recreational value at a local scale and include some recognised and/or popular viewpoints. May be a rare landscape type, or one with some wildlife, cultural or other interests or connections. May be a landscape of limited quality, but with a strong functional element, for example in providing an open gap between settlements. |
| Medium Value | Often pleasant, medium quality landscapes, usually in reasonable condition, with some intact or distinctive elements. Unlikely to be a statutorily or locally designated landscape, but may have some localised scenic qualities. May have some recreational value at a local scale or include some local viewpoints, or have a functional role, for example in providing an open gap between settlements. May have some wildlife, cultural or other interests or connections. |
| Low Value | Likely to be a lower quality landscape, usually in poor condition, with few intact or distinctive elements. Likely to have limited recreational value at a local scale with no significant viewpoints. Few if any wildlife, cultural or other interests or connections. |

1. Note that the above criteria are indicators of the types of landscapes which may be judged to be of the given value - they are not intended to be applied in full or literally in all cases.

12. The assessment of landscape value is then carried forward into the determination of landscape sensitivity.

13. **Landscape sensitivity** relates to the ability of the landscape to accommodate change of the type and scale proposed without adverse effects on its character (i.e. its susceptibility to change), and also to the value of the landscape concerned. As noted in the GLVIA (section 5.39), sensitivity is '*specific to the particular project or development that is being proposed and to the location in question*'. Susceptibility is defined in the GLVIA as '*The ability of a defined landscape or visual receptor to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue negative consequences*'. Susceptibility is judged according to the criteria set out in Table 4 below.

Table 4 ~ Criteria for Determining Landscape Susceptibility

| Category | Typical Criteria ¹ |
|------------------------------|--|
| High Susceptibility | A landscape with a low capacity to accommodate change, either because the change in question would be large scale and/ or out of character with the existing landscape, or because the landscape has little capacity to accept or absorb that change which would be poorly screened and readily visible. The change would conflict with the existing character of the landscape. |
| Medium Susceptibility | A landscape with a moderate capacity to accommodate change, either because the change in question would be generally in scale and/ or character with the existing landscape, or because the landscape has some capacity to accept or absorb that change, which would be partially screened. The change would conflict with the existing character of the landscape to some extent. |
| Low Susceptibility | A landscape with a high capacity to accommodate change, either because the change in question would be small scale and/ or in keeping with the existing landscape, or because the landscape has a high capacity to accept or absorb that change which would be well screened. The change would complement the existing character of the landscape. |

1. Note that the above criteria are indicators of the types of landscapes which may be judged to be of the given level of susceptibility - they are not intended to be applied in full or literally in all cases.

14. The judgement as to sensitivity combines judgements on susceptibility and value. A landscape of high sensitivity will tend to be one with a low ability to accommodate change and a high value, and vice versa. Landscape sensitivity was judged according to the criteria set out in Table 5 below, taking into account factors such as the presence or absence of designations for quality and the nature of the proposed change.

Table 5 ~ Criteria for Determining Landscape Sensitivity

| Sensitivity | Typical Criteria |
|------------------|--|
| Very High | <p>A landscape with a very low ability to accommodate change because such change would lead to a significant loss of valuable features or elements, resulting in a significant loss of character and quality.</p> <p>Development of the type proposed would be discordant and prominent.</p> <p>Will normally occur in a landscape of very high or high quality or value.</p> |
| High | <p>A landscape with limited ability to accommodate change because such change would lead to some loss of valuable features or elements, resulting in a significant loss of character and quality.</p> <p>Development of the type proposed would be discordant and visible.</p> <p>Will normally occur in a landscape of high quality or value, but can also occur where the landscape is of lower quality but where the type of development proposed would be significantly out of character.</p> |
| Medium | <p>A landscape with reasonable ability to accommodate change. Change would lead to a limited loss of some features or elements, resulting in some loss of character and quality.</p> <p>Development of the type proposed would be visible but would not be especially discordant.</p> <p>Will normally occur in a landscape of medium quality or value, a low quality/value landscape which is particularly sensitive to the type of change proposed, or a high quality/value landscape which is well suited to accommodate change of the type proposed.</p> |
| Low | <p>A landscape with good ability to accommodate change. Change would not lead to a significant loss of features or elements, and there would be no significant loss of character or quality.</p> <p>Development of the type proposed would not be readily be visible or would not be discordant.</p> <p>Will normally occur in a landscape of low quality or value.</p> |

1. Note that the above criteria are indicators of the types of landscapes which may be judged to be of the given sensitivity - they are not intended to be applied in full or literally in all cases.

15. **Landscape effects** were determined according to the interaction between magnitude of change and sensitivity, as summarised in Table 6 below. As noted in the GLVIA (section 5.55):

'... susceptibility to change and value can be combined into an assessment of sensitivity for each receptor, and size/scale, geographical extent and duration and reversibility can be combined into an assessment of magnitude for each effect [i.e. magnitude of change]. Magnitude and sensitivity can then be combined to assess overall significance.'

Table 6 ~ Significance Criteria for Landscape Effects

| Significance | Typical Criteria ¹ |
|-------------------------|--|
| No Effect | <p>The proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> complement the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape incorporate measures for mitigation to ensure that the scheme will blend in well with the surrounding landscape avoid being visually intrusive and adverse effects on the current level of tranquillity of the landscape maintain existing landscape character in an area which is not a designated landscape nor vulnerable to change. |
| Insignificant | <p>The proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> generally fit the landform and scale of the landscape have limited effects on views can be mitigated to a reasonable extent avoid effects on designated landscapes. |
| Slight Adverse | <p>The proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> do not quite fit the landform and scale of the landscape will impact on certain views into and across the area cannot be completely mitigated because of the nature of the proposal or the character of the landscape affect an area of recognised landscape quality or value would lead to minor loss of or alteration to existing landscape features or elements, or introduce some minor new uncharacteristic elements. |
| Moderate Adverse | <p>The proposals are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> out of scale or at odds with the landscape visually intrusive and will adversely impact on the landscape not possible to fully mitigate will have an adverse impact on a landscape of recognised quality or value, or on vulnerable and important characteristic features or elements would lead to loss of or alteration to existing landscape features or elements, or introduce some new uncharacteristic elements. |
| High Adverse | <p>The proposals are damaging to the landscape in that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> are at variance with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape are visually intrusive and would disrupt important views are likely to degrade or diminish the integrity of a range of characteristic features and elements and their setting will be damaging to a high quality or value, or highly vulnerable landscape cannot be adequately mitigated would lead to significant loss of or alteration to existing landscape features or elements, or introduce some significant new uncharacteristic elements. |
| Major Adverse | <p>The proposals are very damaging to the landscape in that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> are at considerable variance with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape are visually intrusive and would disrupt fine and valued views are likely to degrade, diminish or even destroy the integrity of a range of characteristic features and elements and their setting will be substantially damaging to a high quality or value, or highly vulnerable landscape, or would fundamentally alter a less valuable landscape cannot be adequately mitigated would lead to extensive loss of or alteration to existing landscape features or elements, or introduce some dominant new uncharacteristic elements. |

1. Note that the above criteria are indicators of the types of situation in which landscape effects of the given level of significance may be expected - they are not intended to be definitions to be applied in full or literally in all cases.
2. Effects in the 'Major Adverse' category are unlikely to occur with most forms of development, but the scale set out above is intended to cover all potential forms of development in all landscapes, so this category is likely to apply only where the landscape is extremely sensitive and/ or where the development is at a very large scale or of a very intrusive nature.

Table 6 ~ Significance Criteria for Landscape Effects (continued)

| Significance | Typical Criteria ¹ |
|----------------------------|---|
| Slight Beneficial | <p>The proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fit the landform and scale of the landscape • will improve certain views into and across the area to a limited extent • can be effectively mitigated • remove small scale unattractive or discordant features • benefit an area of recognised landscape quality or value • would introduce some minor new or restored positive and characteristic elements. |
| Moderate Beneficial | <p>The proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fit the landform and scale of the landscape • will improve certain views into and across the area • can be effectively mitigated • remove significant unattractive or discordant features • benefit a landscape of recognised quality or value, or enhance vulnerable and important characteristic features or elements • would introduce some new or restored positive and characteristic elements. |
| High Beneficial | <p>The proposals provide significant benefit to the landscape in that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are in accord with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape • will improve important views • are likely to enhance a range of characteristic features and elements and their setting • will lead to improvement to a high quality or value, or highly vulnerable landscape • need no significant mitigation • would introduce some significant new or restored positive and characteristic elements. |
| Major Beneficial | <p>The proposals provide very significant benefit to the landscape in that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are in accord with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape • will improve expansive and/or fine and valued views • are likely to significantly enhance a range of characteristic features and elements and their setting • will lead to substantial improvement to a high quality or value, or highly vulnerable landscape • need no mitigation • would introduce some extensive or highly significant new or restored positive and characteristic elements. |

1. Note that the above criteria are indicators of the types of situation in which landscape effects of the given level of significance may be expected - they are not intended to be definitions to be applied in full or literally in all cases.
2. Effects in the 'Major Beneficial' category are unlikely to occur with most forms of development, but the scale set out above is intended to cover all potential forms of development in all landscapes, so this category is likely to apply only where the landscape is extremely sensitive and/ or where the development leads to some major or widespread landscape improvements.

VISUAL EFFECTS

16. For **visual** effects, the GLVIA (in section 2.20) differentiates between effects on specific views and effects on '*the general visual amenity enjoyed by people*', which it defines as:

'The overall pleasantness of the views people enjoy of their surroundings, which provides an attractive visual setting or backdrop for the enjoyment of activities of the people living, working, recreating, visiting or travelling through an area.'

There is obviously some overlap between the two, with **visual amenity** largely being an amalgamation of a series of views. This assessment therefore considers effects on specific views, but then also goes on to consider the extent to which effects on those views may affect general visual amenity, taking into account considerations such as the number of views within which the development may be present, the magnitude of change to those views, the discordance of the development, the relative importance of those views, and also the number and importance of other views in which the development is not present.

17. In describing the nature and content of a view, the following terms may be used:

- No view - no views of the site or development.
- Glimpse - a limited view in which the site or development forms a small part only of the overall view.
- Partial - a clear view of part of the site or development only.
- Oblique - a view (usually through a window from within a property) at an angle, rather than in the direct line of sight out of the window.
- Fleeting - a transient view, usually obtained when moving, along a public right of way or transport corridor.
- Filtered - views of the site or development which are partially screened, usually by intervening vegetation, noting the degree of screening/filtering may change with the seasons.
- Open - a clear, unobstructed view of the site or development.

18. For the purpose of the assessment visual change was categorised as shown in Table 7 below, where each level (other than no change) can be either beneficial or adverse:

| Table 7 ~ Magnitude of Visual Change | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Category | Definition |
| No change | No discernible change. |
| Negligible | The development would be discernible but of no real significance - the character of the view would not materially change. The development may be present in the view, but not discordant. |
| Low | The development would cause a perceptible deterioration (or improvement) in existing views. The development would be discordant (or would add a positive element to the view), but not to a significant extent. |
| Medium | The development would cause an obvious deterioration (or improvement) in existing views. The development would be an obvious discordant (or positive) feature of the view, and/or would occupy a significant proportion of the view. |
| High | The development would cause a dominant deterioration (or improvement) in existing views. The development would be a dominant discordant (or positive) feature of the view, and/or would occupy the majority of the view. |

19. **Sensitivity** was also taken into account in the assessment, such that a given magnitude of change would create a larger visual effect on a sensitive receptor than on one of lesser sensitivity (see Table 8 below). As discussed above for landscape sensitivity, the sensitivity of visual receptors is determined according to the susceptibility of the receptor to change and the value attached to the view in question, with higher value views being those from specific or recognised viewpoints or those from Public Rights of Way where users would be expected to be using the route with the intention of enjoying the views from it.

Table 8 ~ Criteria¹ for Determining Visual Sensitivity

| Sensitivity | Typical Criteria |
|------------------|---|
| Very High | Visitors to recognised or specific viewpoints, or passing along routes through statutorily designated or very high quality landscapes where the purpose of the visit is to experience the landscape and views. |
| High | <p>Residential properties² with predominantly open views from windows, garden or curtilage. Views will normally be from ground and first floors and from two or more windows of rooms in use during the day³.</p> <p>Users of Public Rights of Way with predominantly open views in sensitive or unspoilt areas.</p> <p>Non-motorised users of minor or unclassified roads in the countryside.</p> <p>Visitors to heritage assets where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience, or visitors to locally recognised viewpoints.</p> <p>Users of outdoor recreational facilities with predominantly open views where the purpose of that recreation is enjoyment of the countryside - e.g. Country Parks, National Trust or other access land etc.</p> |
| Medium | <p>Residential properties² with views from windows, garden or curtilage. Views will normally be from first floor windows only³, or an oblique view from one ground floor window, or may be partially obscured by garden or other intervening vegetation.</p> <p>Users of Public Rights of Way with restricted views, in less sensitive areas or where there are significant existing intrusive features.</p> <p>Users of outdoor recreational facilities with restricted views or where the purpose of that recreation is incidental to the view.</p> <p>Schools and other institutional buildings, and their outdoor areas.</p> <p>Motorised users of minor or unclassified roads in the countryside.</p> |
| Low | <p>People in their place of work.</p> <p>Users of main roads or passengers in public transport on main routes.</p> <p>Users of outdoor recreational facilities with restricted views and where the purpose of that recreation is incidental to the view.</p> |

1. Note that the above criteria are indicators of the types of situation in which visual sensitivity of the given level may be expected - they are not intended to be definitions to be applied literally in all cases.
2. There is some discussion in the GLVIA as to whether private views from residential properties should be included within an LVIA, as they are a private (rather than a public) interest, but they have been included in this assessment on the basis that they are likely to matter most to local people. The appropriate weight to be applied to such views can then be determined by the decision maker.
3. When (as is usually the case) there has been no access into properties to be assessed, the assumption is made that ground floor windows are to habitable rooms in use during the day such as kitchens/dining rooms/living rooms, and that first floor rooms are bedrooms.

20. **Visual effects** were then determined according to the interaction between change and sensitivity (see Table 9 below), where effects can be either beneficial or adverse. Where the views are from a residential property, the receptor is assumed to be of high sensitivity unless otherwise stated.

| Table 9 ~ Significance Criteria for Visual Effects | |
|--|--|
| Significance | Typical Criteria ¹ |
| No Effect | No change in the view. |
| Insignificant | The proposals would not significantly change the view, but would still be discernible. |
| Slight | The proposals would cause limited deterioration (or improvement) in a view from a receptor of medium sensitivity, but would still be a noticeable element within the view, or greater deterioration (or improvement) in a view from a receptor of low sensitivity. |
| Moderate | The proposals would cause some deterioration (or improvement) in a view from a sensitive receptor, or less deterioration (or improvement) in a view from a more sensitive receptor, and would be a readily discernible element in the view. |
| High | The proposals would cause significant deterioration (or improvement) in a view from a sensitive receptor, or less deterioration (or improvement) in a view from a more sensitive receptor, and would be an obvious element in the view. |
| Major | The proposals would cause a high degree of change in a view from a highly sensitive receptor, and would constitute a dominant element in the view. |

1. Note that the above criteria are indicators of the types of situation in which visual effects of the given level of significance may be expected - they are not intended to be definitions to be applied literally in all cases.

21. **Photographs** were taken with a digital camera with a lens that approximates to 50mm. This is similar to a normal human field of view, though this field of view is extended where a number of separate images are joined together as a panorama. Photographs were taken in March and September 2023, and visibility during the site visits was good (by definitions set out on the Met Office website, i.e. visibility was between 10 to 20km).
22. The Landscape Institute have produced guidance on the use of visualisations (Technical Guidance Note 06/19, Visual Representation of Development Proposals, September 2019). As its title suggests, this guidance is largely to do with how a proposed development is illustrated, but does also contain sections on baseline photography. Section 1.2.7 states that '*Photographs show the baseline conditions; visualisations show the proposed situation*', though it does than also go on to provide guidance for what it refers to as 'Type 1 Visualisations', which are in fact baseline images - 'Annotated Viewpoint Photographs'. The detailed guidance for these images suggests that panoramic images should be presented at A1 size. As this guidance is extensive, and is intended for use where visualisations such as photomontages are also produced, it has been followed for this assessment in terms of its general recommendations regarding lens types, noting where images have been combined into panoramas and the use of annotations to describe the content of the photographs and the extent of the site within them, but not in terms of all of the recommendations for presentation of images. The photographs included within this assessment are intended as general representations of what can be seen from the viewpoints used, and are not a replacement for observing the site and the views on the ground - any decision maker making use of this assessment should visit the site, and the photographs are simply an *aide-memoire* to assist consideration following a site visit, not a replacement for it.

23. A useful concept in considering the potential visual effects of a development is that of the **visual envelope** (or zone of visual influence, ZVI). This is the area from within which the development would be visible. Any significant visual effects will therefore be contained within this area, and land falling outside it need not be considered in terms of visual effects. The area from within which the proposed development would be visible has therefore been estimated but it is possible that in practice some limited views may be obtained from more distant properties or from elevated, distant vantage points, above or through intervening vegetation, and such views are referred to where appropriate in the assessment.

APPENDIX B ~ Architect's Drawings

Proposed Site (Block) Plan
Proposed Coloured Front Elevation - Unit 1



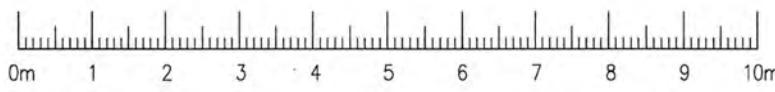
Proposed Site Plan
Scale 1:200



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| DATE: | 10.23 |
| SCALE: | 1:200 |
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| PAGE SIZE: | A1 |
| DRAWING NUMBER: | |
| Proposed Site (Block) Plan | |
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