Harefield Academy Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Prepared for: Noviun Architects

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Contents

Version Control

Version	Author	Changes from previous version	Checked by	Date checked
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Figure 1 – Site Location Plan

Proposed development site

1 Introduction

Wynne-Williams Associates has been appointed by Noviun Architects to undertake a landscape and visual impact assessment of the proposed special educational needs school at Harefield Academy, Northwood Way, Harefield, Uxbridge UB9 6ET **[Figure 1]**. Wynne-Williams Associates is a practice registered with the Landscape Institute with many years' experience in landscape design and landscape and visual impact assessments.

The purpose of this report is to provide a detailed consideration of the likely landscape and visual effects of a proposed development on the existing landscape. The proposed development is outlined in more detail in **Section 3** of this report.

This report describes the existing landscape and assesses the landscape and visual effects that the proposed development would have on the character and quality of that landscape using guidance set out in the Landscape Institute Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition (GLVIA 3).

2 Methodology

The report has been compiled by Bobby Browne CMLI (Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute).

Fieldwork for the assessment was carried out on the 4th August 2023 and this report contains observations and photos taken only from this date.

The full methodology for this report can be found in Appendix B. This methodology has been used to inform the report approach as set out below.

The landscape and visual assessment have been undertaken in accordance with the guidance given in GLVIA3, which recommends that an assessment is made of the likely impacts of the development and their significance. The approach distinguishes between landscape and visual effects;

Landscape effects consider the effect of the proposed development on the existing landscape as a resource in its own right.

Visual effects consider the effect on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people.

The Guidance also makes a distinction between landscape receptors and visual receptors:

Landscape receptors are defined aspects of the landscape resource that have the potential to be affected by a proposal.

Visual receptors are individuals and/or defined groups of people who have the potential to be affected by a proposal.

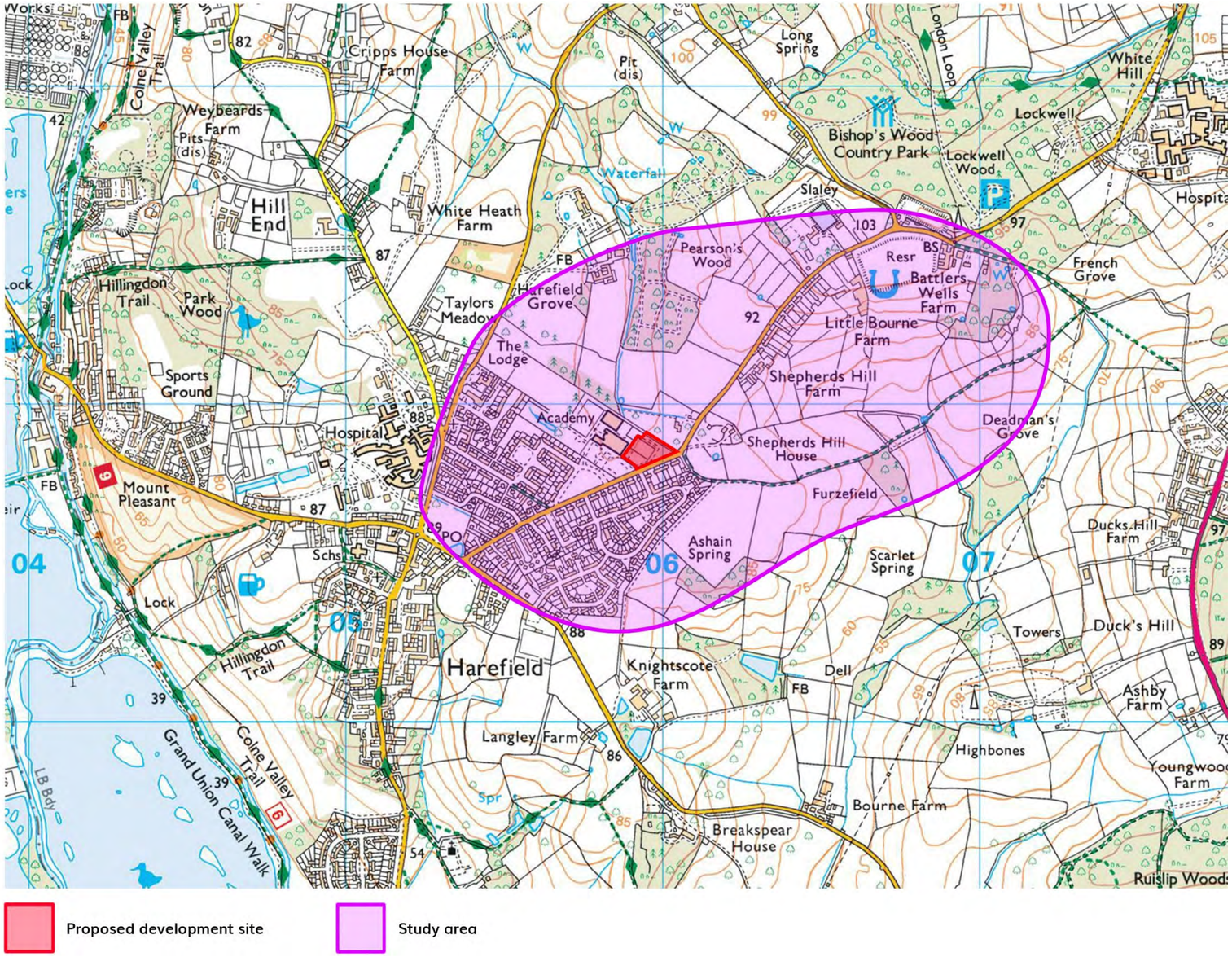
The appraisal process is divided into a description of:

- The existing landscape base line
- Appraisal of the landscape effects
- The existing visual baseline
- Appraisal of visual effects
- Suggested mitigation techniques

2.1 Study Area

The defined study area is the area within which it is considered the proposed development could have effects. The extent of the study area was identified following a careful review of topography using OS maps and verified during a site visit **[Figure 2]**.

Figure 2 – Study Area Plan



3 Proposed Development

The Harefield Academy is an existing secondary school with an established campus. A detailed consideration of the existing site and surroundings is provided in Section 4. The proposals include the demolition of a former residential boarding block (Lord Adonis House) and erection of academic building (Use Class F1) and ancillary structures including heat pump and substation enclosures.

The existing Lord Adonis House building (3 to 4-storeys in height) and will be replaced with a 2-storey building **[see Figure 3]**. The new building will offer provision for students with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) and will be sited on a similar footprint to Lord Adonis House.

The development will also provide a range of formal and informal external learning spaces. This will include the conversion of existing tennis courts to a large play area and synthetic grass multi use games area (MUGA). An existing car park in the north-east corner of the site will be formalised on a similar footprint.

An additional entrance is proposed along Northwood Road. This will require some localised tree removal to facilitate access through the existing mature tree line (tree group G001 on the submitted Arboricultural Survey). Further individual trees will need to be removed to allow construction of the new building (tree numbers T005, 006, 011, 017, 018, 022, 023, and 024).

The proposed landscape scheme includes the planting of 51no. trees, substantial areas of herbaceous and shrub planting, as well as a 59 linear metres of new hedge planting.

There are no requirements for major changes in topographic levels to facilitate development.

Figure 3 – Proposed Site Layout

4 The Existing Site and Context

The proposed site is located on the existing Harefield Academy campus, with the red line boundary restricted to the eastern part of the campus **[see Figure 1]**.

The existing campus houses a well-established school with a large 3 to 4 storey 'superblock' accommodating the main teaching facilities. The school also includes a sizable sports building, north of the main building. A further building, Lord Adonis House, was formerly used for boarding accommodation. This building, due to be replaced by a new SEND school, is finished with a white render and contains a walled garden area to the west.

The rest of the school campus includes car parking, external play areas, and a mixture of grass and all-weather physical education provision. Topographic change across the campus is small, ranging from 89m AOD in the west to approximately 86m AOD in the east.

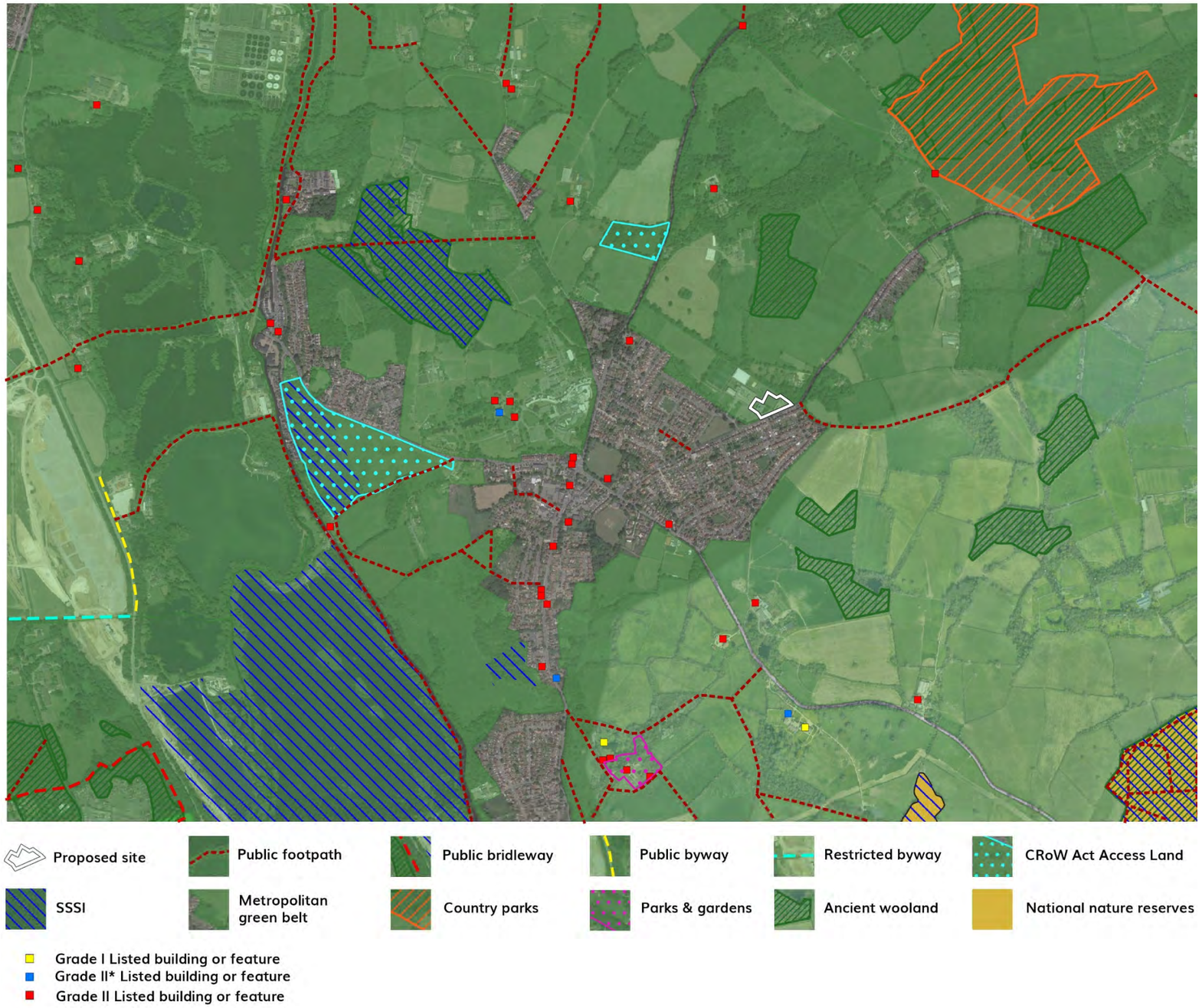
The northern boundary of the site is marked by a dense tree line, restricting intervisibility with a large residential property known as Roundwood House to the north. Further north, the landscape includes a mixture of agricultural fields and blocks of woodland interspersed with isolated properties and small commercial enterprises. A linear row of housing stretches north-eastwards to rising topography along Northwood Road. The land peaks at approximately 103m AOD at the northern end of Northwood Road.

A mature tree line delineates the eastern red line boundary, separating the school from Northwood Road and providing visual screening at ground level. Multiple rows of housing exist to the south-east along Northwood Road and Ash Grove, before the landscape opens up into more arable land and woodland blocks. This separates the settlements of Harefield and Northwood.

The existing Northwood Academy campus is accessed from the south, off Northwood Way. The southern boundary of the campus includes a mixture of fencing and large boundary trees. Further south is a triangular area of amenity grass which is freely accessible for local residents to use for recreation. The main residential area of Harefield stretches south and south-west of the site.

West of the red line boundary, the Harefield Academy campus buildings and sports facilities dominate the landscape. Playing fields separate the school building

Figure 4 – Planning context plan



from further residential development and Harefield Hospital, approximately 600m to the west.

4.1 Landscape Planning Context

The full site within the red line boundary and the remaining Harefield Academy campus all lie within the London Metropolitan Green Belt. A consideration on the effects on green belt openness is provided within Section 8.

Away from the areas of residential development immediately adjacent, there are various clusters of ancient woodland **[refer Figure 4]**. The closet being Pearsons Wood to the north, as well as Ashain Spring and Furzefield to the east.

Multiple sites of special scientific interest (SSSI) are located far west of the proposed site, all at least 1km away. These include old Park Wood, the Mid Colne Valley, and Harefield Pit. In addition, Ruislip Woods national nature reserve (NNR) is located over 1.5km to the south-east. There are also two areas of registered common land, Watts Common to the north, and an unnamed parcel to the west.

Various Listed buildings are located within Harefield and in the surrounding countryside to the north. The Harefield Conservation Area is also located south-west of the site, starting at the southern end of Northwood Road. This appraisal does not predict any changes to the landscape setting of such heritage assets as a result of the proposed development.

Public rights of way (PRoW) serving the surrounding landscape are limited. Within the identified study area, PRoW U11 stretches east of the site towards Northwood, and U12 runs between houses south of the site.

It is important to note that Areas of Special Local Character existing as a local designation within Hillingdon. However, neither the site nor the surrounding study area is identified as being within one.

4.2 Existing Landscape Character

As part of this appraisal, the relevant documents which describe the landscape character of the locality as well as providing landscape design guidelines for the area have been reviewed.

4.2.1 Natural England National Character Areas (NCA)

The site and surrounding area are located in national character area 115, the Thames Valley. This is an assessment with a broad focus and stretches from Reading in the west to Wimbledon in the east. Due to the wide-reaching descriptions in the assessment, not all of the key characteristics can be observed in the area immediately surrounding the site. The characteristics that can be observed in the vicinity of the proposed site are:

- Flat and low-lying land, rising to low, river-terraced hills.
- 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.
- 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.

4.2.2 London's Natural Signatures: The London Landscape Framework

This strategic level assessment was carried out by Alan Baxter for Natural England in 2011. The aim was to establish the key characteristics of natural landscapes within Greater London and to define a vision for each area. The site falls within area 2, the Ruislip Plateau. Relevant extracts include:

- The National Nature Reserve of Ruislip Woods is the dominant landscape feature and ecological resource. It forms the landscape setting for the settlements of Harrow, Northwood and Ickenham. The urban areas wrap around these ancient woodlands, which are criss-crossed with local paths and provide a popular recreational destination for residents.
- Within the farmed parts of the plateau there are areas where thick native hedgerows, dotted with ancient hedgerow trees, form an inter-connected patchwork, enclosing pastures with field ponds.

'Key influences' are stated to be:

- Remnant ancient woodlands with subtle variations in the mix of species and woodland structure which echo the underlying geology and history of the area.
- Hornbeam coppice, glades and bluebell – the product of years of traditional woodland management – reflecting links between local culture and economy.
- Wildflower meadows enclosed by species-rich hedgerows.
- Field ponds.
- Ancient gnarled hedgerow oak trees.
- Shady woodland paths, with carpets of moss.
- Decaying fallen trees – a reminder of slow, gradual natural change.

The report also identifies 'design clues' which are intended to shape future design principles within the area:

- Timber as a dominant material throughout the public realm – for path margins, fencing, seats, signs, screens – willow walks.
- Logs converted to sculpture – for seats, decorative carving, signs etc.
- Hedgerows and oak trees, as a means for defining and dividing open spaces, car parks and routes.
- Specimen trees, planted individually and in groups, clumps of multi-stem trees to echo the ancient woodland species, as feature planting.
- More substantial blocks of woodland planting – enough to create a sense of passing from light to

shade along roads and footpaths (so the routes pass through the trees, not just alongside them).

- Hornbeam, hazel and both native oaks in appropriate planting of hedgerows, boundary features and woodland.
- Wildflower meadows on verges and embankments at key gateways into area.

4.2.3 Hillingdon Landscape Character Assessment

The local landscape character assessment for the area was carried out by Land Use Consultants in 2012. The proposed site falls within the 'urban' typology, not characterised by the report. However, part of the identified study area, arable land to the east, lies within area D1 the Harefield Wooded Undulating Farmland. Relevant key landscape characteristics include:

- A smoothly undulating tributary valley landform of the River Colne, underlain by London Clay Formation, with occasional Lambeth Group following the valley floor. Some sand and gravel formations on higher ground in the north and west.
- A mosaic of farmland and woodland, comprising medium sized sinuous fields of pasture and rough grazing, and some areas of paddock. Some areas of 19th century enclosure in the south. Field boundaries are commonly defined by a dense network of hedgerows with maure trees (oaks), and occasional wooden post fencing.
- Bayhurst Wood Country Park and Ruislip Wood National Nature Reserve comprise two large areas of ancient woodland in the south of the area, both SSSIs with significant biodiversity value. Common species include common or sessile oak, hornbeam, beech, aspen and sweet chestnut.
- Settlement density is low, comprising scattered farmsteads, and only one linear row of housing in the north, along Northwood Road. Modern settlement edge of Harefield and Northwood are prominent in the west and east, respectively.
- Few roads cross the landscape, often ancient. A number of local footpaths pass through the area, with several marked routes, including The Hillingdon Trail long distance footpath. Bayhurst Wood Country Park and Ruislip Wood National Nature Reserve provide recreational opportunities and numerous footpaths providing easy public access.
- Varying degrees of enclosure, with open fields contrasted with dense woodland areas. Open rolling fields allow for panoramic vistas, with long views towards across the landscape and glimpses of distant urban settlement. Bayhurst Wood provides a prominent backdrop to many views south.
- A uniform landscape, with high woodland cover and low settlement density, which contributes to a sense of intimacy and tranquillity and a strong rural character.

Relevant landscape planning guidelines are stated to be:

- Conserve and enhance the extensive woodland cover, which provides important landscape character, enclosure and a backdrop to views.
- Conserve and manage the network of hedgerows, and hedgerow trees, which provide visual unity and a wildlife corridor. Consider replanting hedgerows which have been lost.
- Maintain the essentially undeveloped rural character, with limited settlement development and roads.

  Avoid introducing large scale elements (such as pylons and masts) which are highly visible and would disrupt the intimate undulating valley landscape.
- Conserve open views across arable farmland to wooded horizons.
- Ensure that new buildings and development is sensitively integrated into the landscape through careful siting, and screening. Seek to integrate and soften existing settlement edge.
- Conserve the character and setting of historic listed buildings, which provide important historic context and prominent features in the landscape.
- Conserve the intact, remote and peaceful character which is formed by the woodland cover, absence of modern development and roads.
- Conserve the areas of woodland which provide enclosure and form an important character of the area, and provide invaluable biodiversity benefit and recreational resource.

4.2.4 Colne Valley Landscape Character Assessment

The Colne Valley Landscape Partnership appointed Alison Farmer Associates to undertake a landscape character assessment of the Partnership's Project Area in 2017. This identified the site and surroundings to be within the Rickmansworth to Uxbridge Wooded Farmland. Key characteristics include:

- Elevated, gently rolling farmland east of the Colne Valley, dissected by small steams.
- Complex superficial geology of clays and gravels overlaying chalk bedrock.
- Mix of 18th and 19th century field enclosures, with areas of larger 20th/21st century fields defined by hedgerows and scattered trees (oak in south).
- Mixed farming but predominately pasture with some rough grazing and arable.
- Substantial ancient woodland including Ruislip National Nature Reserve.
- Settlement density is low comprising scattered farmsteads (many listed) and larger settlements on the edges of the area often with historic centres e.g. Harefield.
- Remnant parkland landscape and features e.g. Breakspear Park and Harefield Place.
- Open views across farmland to wooded skylines.
- Sparse network of rural lanes with extensive areas of agricultural land in between.

Key landscape strategies listed for the area include:

- Protect the rural quiet character of lanes resisting unsympathetic highways improvement, signage, effects of farm diversification or verge erosion.
- Protect the rural setting of historic parkland landscapes and ancient veteran trees and listed buildings which add to local distinctiveness and sense of place.
- Protect the historic enclosure pattern across this landscape particularly where it occurs in association with rural lanes, farmsteads and parkland.
- Protect areas of ancient woodland and ensure appropriate management.
- Protect area from inappropriately sited development where it may undermine the pattern of land use and be visually prominent.

4.2.5 Hillingdon Townscape Character Study

Compiled by Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners in 2013, the Hillingdon Townscape Character Study identifies 16 different townscape typologies within the Borough. A general description for Harefield and its surroundings includes:

- Much of the north western corner of the borough remains the open and wooded countryside it has been for centuries. Rural farms remain, albeit much rationalised.
- Harefield is the only settlement and centre in this part of the borough, and it has a long history - recorded as Herefelle in the Domesday Book (1086).
- Harefield is home to a number of key buildings including Harefield House (built in mid 18th century) and Harefield Hospital (opened in 1937). The historic village centre remains largely in tact. Growth of the village has been drawn out along the settlement's approach routes, with significant Garden City style development at South Harefield in the mid 20th century.
- This area also has some significant industrial areas, which are concentrated along the canal.

The report identifies the townscape typology of the site to be a 'campus'. It explains this to mean, "Campus development is normally associated with business or institutional uses such as colleges, hospitals or civic buildings. They are typically characterised by "collections" of buildings, often set within the middle of a site, and areas of open space which may include playing fields or formal landscape". Key characteristics include:

- Groups of buildings isolated from their surrounding context, often with security or monitoring to discourage or prevent casual access.
- Internal network of streets and spaces.
- Strong landscape character.
- Range of architectural character - its is quite common to see a gradual accretion of buildings over time with a varied style and design.

4.2.6 Observed Landscape Character

The baseline landscape character assessments provide useful descriptions of many observable features within the study area and practical design guidance. However, it is also important to consider more site-specific elements of landscape character that were observed during fieldwork for this appraisal.

The existing Harefield Academy campus is a well-established feature within the surrounding area. Existing vegetation is dense along the northern, southern, and eastern boundaries, providing considerable screening at lower levels.

The main school block and Lord Adonis House are visible within a highly localised area. Views are restricted to the upper portions of buildings seen above existing trees. The residential area to the south and west of the site has a strong suburban character.

Away from the settlement of Harefield, land further north and east of the site quickly becomes rural in character. Extensive fields, with mature boundary tree lines are punctuated by sizable blocks of woodland.

5 Landscape Value

The latest methodology for assessing landscape value outside national designations is outlined in Technical Guidance Note 02-21, published by the Landscape Institute in 2021. It is necessary to examine the site and the role it plays within its immediate context. The headings below outline the factors to be considered:

Natural Heritage

The site itself does not display clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological, or physiographic interest. However, rural land to the north and east will have local natural capital value, contributing to a green infrastructure network.

Cultural Heritage

The site itself does not hold cultural heritage value, but the Harefield Conservation Area is located at the southern end of the study area.

Landscape Condition

Landscape elements on the site such as boundary trees and hedgerows appear to be in good condition. Condition of the surrounding landscape varies greatly, but can be summarised as being in fair condition.

Associations

There are no well-known associations between notable people, events, or the arts and the study area.

Distinctiveness

There are no rare or unusual landscape features, but the site does make a contribution to the identity of a settlement.

Recreational

There are no PRoWs that cross the site, but there is a limited PRoW network within the wider study area. A triangular area of amenity grass exists opposite the entrance to Harefield Academy. This provides recreational opportunities for local residents.

Perceptual (Scenic)

Some pleasant views exist within rural land to the east of the study area. However, the contribution the site makes to the general scenic value of the landscape is reduced by its proximity to existing residential development and mature boundary vegetation.

Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquillity)

A relative sense of tranquillity can be experienced along a limited section of footpath east of the site. Existing development and road noise restricts a wider sense of tranquillity within the suburban area of Harefield.

Functional

The site itself is a functional educational landscape. Its role within the function of the wider landscape is limited. Rural land to the north and east forms an important part of the wider green infrastructure network.

5.1 Appraisal of landscape value

In general, the site and surroundings hold some value, with specific elements or areas demonstrating increased value for particular factors outlined above.

Based on Appendix B, Table 2, the description that best suits the site itself is a medium/local value assessment. This denotes 'pleasant but ordinary landscapes with intrusive elements including infrastructure and unattractive buildings'.

5.2 Landscape Susceptibility and Sensitivity

Landscape sensitivity is defined as a combination of the landscape value of the receptor and its capacity to accommodate change without significant effects on its components or overall character.

Landscape receptors can include individual and constituent landscape elements, aesthetic and perceptual qualities, and landscape character. Highly valued landscapes may have local or national designations, but many landscapes are valued by their communities for different reasons without being formally designated as a high quality or highly valued landscape.

The condition of the landscape and its level of intactness within a character type are important factors in assessing sensitivity. The landscape sensitivity has been assessed using the methodology and definitions set out in **Appendix B, Table 1**, it considers both the quality of the receptor and the receptor's ability to accommodate change as compared to the baseline.

The existing campus character of the Harefield Academy site is clearly designed for functional educational use. The proposals seek to demolish Lord Adonis House and replace it with a SEND school on a very similar footprint. Proposals for the external spaces provide an upgrade to existing educational facilities without a substantial increase in hard surfacing. The site has a good ability to accommodate this type of change without causing a shift in its baseline character.

The residential streets surrounding Harefield Academy act to enclose and confine the character of the school campus. As there has been some form of educational development on the site since the 1960s, the character of the surrounding streets has evolved with the school. It is therefore likely that the baseline character of the surrounding area would not be changed by the proposals.

The site and surroundings are therefore assessed to hold a low susceptibility in accommodating the proposed development.

Landscape sensitivity is determined by a combination of assessed landscape value and susceptibility. The value of the site was considered to be medium/local in Section 5.1, with a low susceptibility to change outlined above. These ratings combine to form an assessment of moderate to low sensitivity for the site.

With this in mind, the proposed development must be carried out sympathetically and include appropriate mitigation measures to lessen the effects of the scheme. These are discussed in Section 9 of this report.

6 Landscape Effects

Landscape effects may be adverse, neutral, or beneficial and are determined as part of the landscape appraisal of the proposed development once operational. The landscape appraisal considers;

- The type of effect
- The sensitivity of the baseline landscape
- The predicted magnitude of effect

6.1 Landscape Receptors

Based on the review of precedent landscape character assessments and observed landscape character elements, identified landscape receptors include:

- Site itself
- Immediate surroundings and Harefield settlement edge
- LCA D1 Harefield Wooded Undulating Farmland

6.2 Magnitude of Landscape Change

Effects on landscape receptors need to be assessed in terms of size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced, and the duration and reversibility of proposed changes.

The magnitude of effects has been assessed in accordance with the criteria set out in **Appendix B Table 5**.

6.2.1 Size or scale

The building footprint of the new SEND school is very similar to the existing Lord Adonis House, but the proposed building height is lower than existing. A comparison of existing versus proposed hard and soft surfacing shows a small 1.6% increase in hard surfacing. This number is low due to most of the external development taking place on the previously developed tennis courts. The character of the site will remain that of an educational campus.

Tree removal is restricted to a small group from the eastern boundary to facilitate the new access off Northwood Road. Other select individual trees are required for removal in other parts of the site. This must be balanced against the proposed 51no. trees and 59 linear metres of hedgerow. There is no requirement for major changes in topographic levels across the site.

Geographical extent

The existing vegetation and localised changes in topography that surround the site will restrict effects on landscape character to a small geographical extent. The new building will be perceived from a limited number of places outside of the red line boundary, along Northwood Road, Northwood Way, and Ash Grove. However, it will appear less prominent than the existing Lord Adonis House.

Landscape effects will be restricted to a local level, with negligible effects on the wider landscape character area (D1 Harefield Wooded Undulating Farmland) as a whole.

Duration and reversibility

The predicted limited landscape effects should be considered permanent and irreversible. Effects will be amplified during construction due to the increase in activity and the temporary presence of uncharacteristic machinery and stockpiles of materials.

Summary of landscape change

The proposed development is not likely to present a noticeable change in baseline character across the existing school campus site. The proposals are in keeping with the educational facilities that exist at Harefield Academy, with the new SEND building being sited on a similar footprint and at a lower height.

Considering each of the points above and using the descriptions in **Table 5, Appendix B,** the assessment of the magnitude of landscape change by receptor is given below:

- Site itself - **low**
- Immediate surroundings and Harefield settlement edge – **low to negligible**
- LCA D1 Harefield Wooded Undulating Farmland – **negligible to no change**

6.3 Significance of Landscape Effects

Landscape effect is determined by reference to the baseline assessment of the existing landscape and can be classified as adverse, neutral or beneficial **[Appendix B Table 6]**.

Based on the current proposals and bearing in mind the proposed mitigation scheme, the overall significance of landscape effect for each receptor is assed below:

- Site itself – **minor adverse**
- Immediate surroundings and Harefield settlement edge – **minor adverse to neutral**
- LCA D1 Harefield Wooded Undulating Farmland – **neutral**

7 Visibility of the Proposed Development

7.1 Visual Sensitivity of Receptors

The sensitivity of visual receptors to changes in views is mainly determined by the occupation or activity of the person experiencing the view and the extent to which their attention or interest may be focused on the view. Visual receptors most susceptible to change are generally likely to include:

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

Within the study area, the most sensitive receptors were identified as residents within properties along Northwood Road, Northwood Way, Ash Grove, and part of Hall Drive. Recreational users PRoW U11 and the triangular amenity grass space adjacent to Northwood Way were also considered to be high sensitivity receptors. Road users in the vicinity have been classed as medium sensitivity receptors due to them travelling at

a moderate speed with oblique views to the site. There were no low sensitivity visual receptors identified.

7.2 Selection of Viewpoints

A selection of viewpoints was chosen to be representative of views into the site from the surrounding area. **Figure 5** shows the location of each viewpoint with marker numbers correlating to full analysis available in **Appendix A**. The viewpoints were all taken from publicly accessible locations.

7.3 Visual Effects

Visual effects are concerned wholly with the effect of the development on views, and general visual amenity of people who have or may have views of the development. Visual effects may include:

- Visual obstruction or physical blocking of a view
- Visual intrusion of the proposed development into an existing view or loss of particular landscape elements or features already present in the view
- Cumulative or incremental visibility of similar types of development may combine to have a cumulative visual effect.

The visual effects are assessed as a product of receptor sensitivity and the predicted magnitude of change. Criteria are given in Appendix B.

7.4 Magnitude and Significance of Visual Effects

Predicted visual effects on the receptors for each viewpoint have been assessed across three timeframes:

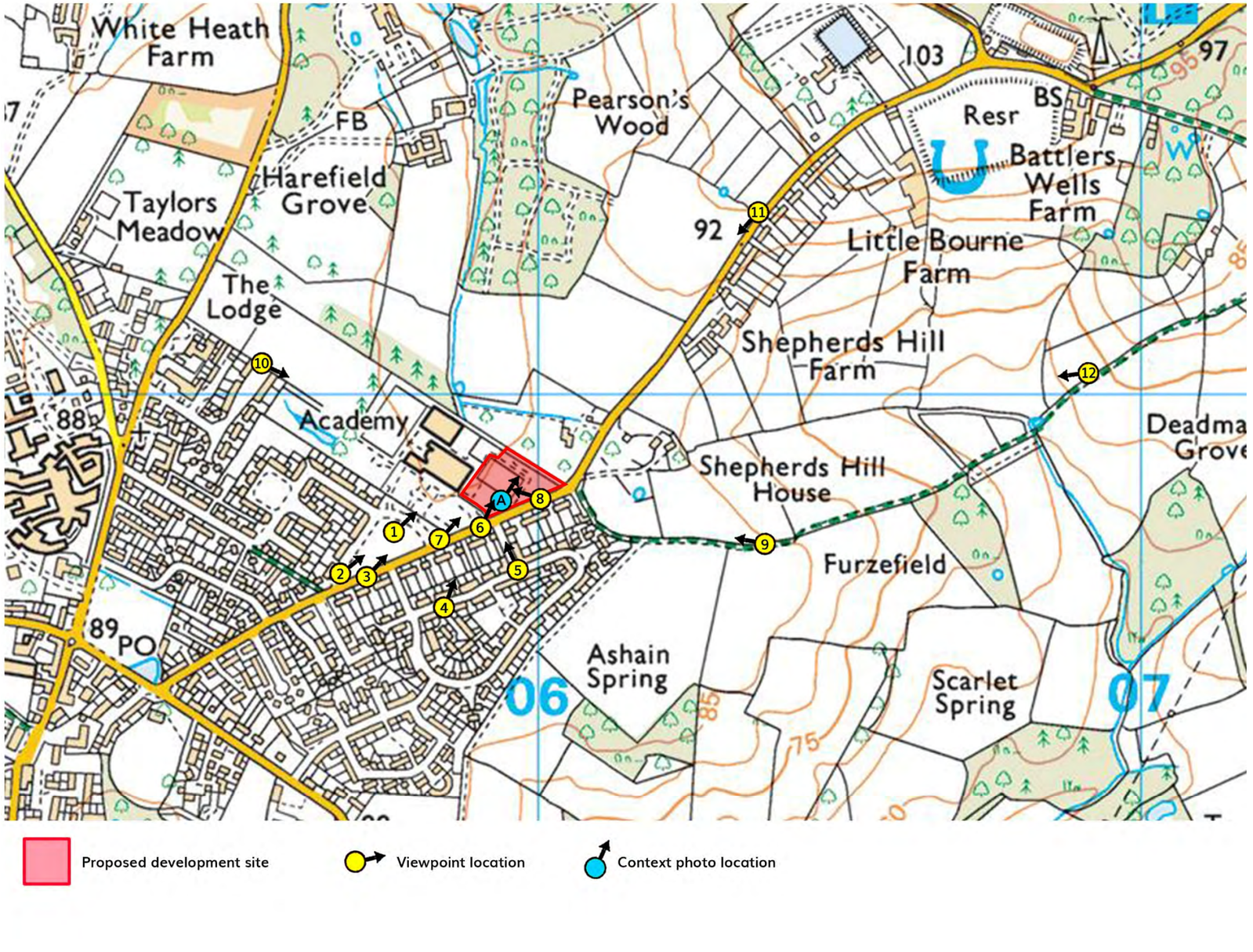
- During construction (winter)
- 1 year following completion (winter)
- 15 years following completion (summer)

The magnitude and significance of effects on receptors at all 12 representative viewpoints is summarised below by receptor group.

7.4.1 Residential

For residents along Northwood Way, close to the existing Harefield Academy entrance south-west of the proposed site, there will be filtered views to the

Figure 5 – Viewpoint location plan



proposed SEND building **[refer to viewpoint 2].** The new building will appear in a very similar position to Lord Adonis House, but will be lower in height. Existing vegetation will screen lower portions of development. Visual change for residents along Northwood Way is assessed to be low during construction, reducing to negligible by Year 15. This represents a slight adverse to neutral effect at Year 15.

Visual effects for residents along Northwood Road will vary by their position in relation to the proposed site. There are not likely to be any views of development further south than the Leys Close turning, approximately 350m away from the site. This therefore means there will be no visual effects to residents within the Harefield Conservation Area.

Viewpoints 3, 6, and 7 represent views from Northwood Road residents close to the southern side of the site. Many existing views to Lord Adonis House are heavily screened. It is possible that construction activity may be visible for a short time, leading to a moderate to slight adverse effect. However, following completion and by the time proposed planting has matured, visual effects will reduce to a neutral level for these residents in Year 15.

Visual effects for residents closer to the proposed entrance off Northwood Road are represented by **viewpoint 8**. Although the new turning head is already in place, visual change will occur due to the tree removal required. Initially, this will lead to a moderate adverse level of visual effect during construction due to the breaking of a continuous tree line. By Year 15, following establishment of proposed boundary planting, this will reduce to a slight adverse to neutral visual effect. This level applies to a very limited number of properties directly adjacent to the new entrance.

Residents living on the linear stretch of Northwood Road beyond woodland north of the site will not experience any visual effects **[refer to viewpoint 11].** This is also likely to be true for residents of Roundwood House directly north of the site, but could not be verified without access to private land.

For the majority of residents along Ash Grove, the proposed development will not be visible **[refer to viewpoint 4].** There will be views above existing vegetation for a select number of properties situated on or adjacent to the spur of Ash Grove that leads south-eastwards away from Lord Adonis House **[refer to viewpoint 5]**. From here, construction work is likely to be visible above the treeline for a short period of time, causing a moderate to slight adverse visual effect. However, following completion this reduces to a neutral effect as the new building will sit on a similar footprint, but with reduced height.

There will be no views available to the proposed site from Hall Drive to the west. This is illustrated by **viewpoint 10**. Existing trees and school buildings will obscure all views.

7.4.2 Recreational

Visual effects for people using the triangular area of amenity grass close to the existing Harefield Academy entrance will be similar to those of residents along Northwood Way **[refer to viewpoint 1].** The proposed, lower SEND building will still be visible above existing trees, but will be less prominent in the view than the existing. Visual effects are predicted to be moderate to slight adverse during construction, reducing to neutral by Year 15.

Viewpoints 9 and 12 represent potential views from PRoW U11, which traverses countryside east of the site. Due to intervening buildings and topography, there will be no visual change to users of this footpath and therefore no visual effects.

7.4.3 Road Users in Vehicles

People travelling in cars along Northwood Way, Northwood Road, and Ash Grove will have limited visibility to the proposed development. This is likely to be restricted to oblique glimpses. During construction this may lead to slight adverse effects, reducing to neutral by completion.

8 Effects on Green Belt Openness

When considering the potential effects of the proposals on the openness of the Green Belt, assessment is based on the National Planning Practice Guidance on Green Belt which states "Assessing the impact of a proposal on the openness of the Green Belt, where it is relevant to do so, requires a judgment based on the circumstances of the case. By way of example, the courts have identified a number of matters which may need to be taken into account in making this assessment. These include, but are not limited to:

- Openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects – in other words, the visual impact of the proposal may be relevant, as could its volume;
- The duration of the development, and its remediability – taking into account any provisions to return land to its original state or to an equivalent (or improved) state of openness; and
- The degree of activity likely to be generated, such as traffic generation."

An assessment of the proposals under each of the suggested headings is given below.

8.1.1 Spatial and Visual Effects on Openness

The proposed development will demolish and existing building and provide a new SEND building on a similar footprint. The new building will be lower in height, representing an overall smaller incursion into Green Belt land.

When comparing the associated proposed hard surfacing against the existing hard surfacing within the red line boundary the scheme would lead to a 1.6% increase. Therefore, in spatial terms, the proposals equate to a very minor increase in area of hard surfacing, but a reduction in three-dimensional building height. This represents a neutral effect on spatial Green Belt openness.

In visual terms, as detailed in Section 7, the proposals are likely to lead to a moderate to slight level of visual effect for a small number of receptors during construction. This predominantly relates to the activity and machinery involved with construction and is predicted to reduce to a neutral level for each receptor group by Year 15. There are, therefore, no predicted lasting effects on visual Green Belt openness.

8.1.2 The Duration and Remediability of Development

The proposed scheme should be regarded as permanent and not remediable. There is no evidence to suggest provisions have been made to return land

to its original state or to an equivalent (or improved) state of openness.

8.1.3 The Degree of Activity Likely to be Generated

There is likely to be a temporary increase in activity on site during construction of the proposals. This will include the movement of machinery, materials, and construction workers. Following completion, activity is likely to reduce. The Transport Assessment accompanying the application states "development at the new site is expected to produce a relatively low number of vehicle trips. This is attributed to the small scale of the development and pupils travel to school in multiple-occupancy vehicles". With a low level of increased vehicle activity and everyday school functions predominantly limited to standard school hours, the degree of activity likely to be generated by the scheme will not have an effect on Green Belt openness.

9 Mitigating the Impact of the Development

The proposed development scheme includes a series of measures to reduce landscape and visual effects on identified receptors. The siting and orientation of proposed SEND building has been carefully considered to be similar to the existing Lord Adonis House. In addition, by reducing the height of the proposed building to below the level of Adonis House, built development is likely to be less intrusive.

The material palette for the new building includes a combination of buff coloured brick with a darker brown feature brick. This will be punctuated with natural brown Rockwall cladding. When compared to the existing white render on Lord Adonis House, this will appear less visually intrusive. The sympathetic palette will also provide more visual harmony with the adjacent Harewood Academy main school block.

The scheme seeks to retain existing trees where possible. Established trees will provide a greater level of visual screening at lower levels and act to integrate new development within the surrounding residential area. Replacement tree planting, in excess of those being removed, and a considerable increase in hedge planting will also add natural capital and visual amenity value.

10 Conclusions

The proposed development includes the demolition of a former residential boarding block (Lord Adonis House) and erection of an academic building (Use Class F1) and ancillary structures including heat pump and substation enclosures. The red line boundary includes part of the existing Harefield Academy campus, Northwood Way, Harefield, Uxbridge UB9 6ET.

The existing campus houses a well-established school with a large 3 to 4 storey 'superblock' accommodating the main teaching facilities. The school also includes a sizable sports building, north of the main building. A further building, Lord Adonis House, was formerly used for boarding accommodation. This building, due to be replaced by a new SEND school, is finished with a white render and contains a walled garden area to the west.

The full site within the red line boundary and the remaining Harefield Academy campus all lie within the London Metropolitan Green Belt. Within the vicinity are various clusters of ancient woodland, SSSIs, and parcels of common land. Various Listed buildings are located within Harefield and in the surrounding countryside to the north. The Harefield Conservation Area is also located south-west of the site, starting at the southern end of Northwood Road. This appraisal does not predict any changes to designated landscape areas or the setting of heritage assets as a result of the proposed development.

Landscape receptors for the assessment were considered to be the site itself, the immediate surroundings and Harefield settlement edge, as well as LCA D1 Harefield Wooded Undulating Farmland.

Landscape effects are predicted to be highly localised. The proposed development is not likely to present a noticeable change in baseline character across the existing school campus site. The proposals are in keeping with the educational facilities that exist at Harefield Academy, with the new SEND building being sited on a similar footprint and at a lower height. Landscape effects on the site itself are predicted to be minor adverse. Minor adverse to neutral effects are predicted for the immediate surroundings and Harefield settlement edge, with neutral effects predicted for LCA D1.

Surrounding the site are highly sensitive visual receptors including residents in their own homes, as well as people using a triangular amenity grass space and PRoW U11 for recreation. Medium sensitivity receptors were identified to be motorists in vehicles along the local road network.

Effects on visual receptors were illustrated by 12 representative viewpoints. By Year 15 slight adverse to neutral visual effects were predicted for a small group of residents along Northwood Road, close to the proposed new entrance. This represented the highest level of identified visual effect.

Neutral visual effects were assessed for most other residents of Northwood Road, residents of Northwood Way, a select number of residents of Ash Grove, as well as people using the triangular amenity grass space. No visual effects were predicted for people using PRoW U11, residents of Hall Drive, and most residents of Ash Grove.

A series of mitigation measures are shown within the proposed scheme including the careful siting and orientation of proposed buildings, a reduction in proposed building height, and sympathetic material choices to provide visual harmony with the adjacent Harefield Academy main building. In addition, the building finish is likely to be less visually intrusive than the existing white render.

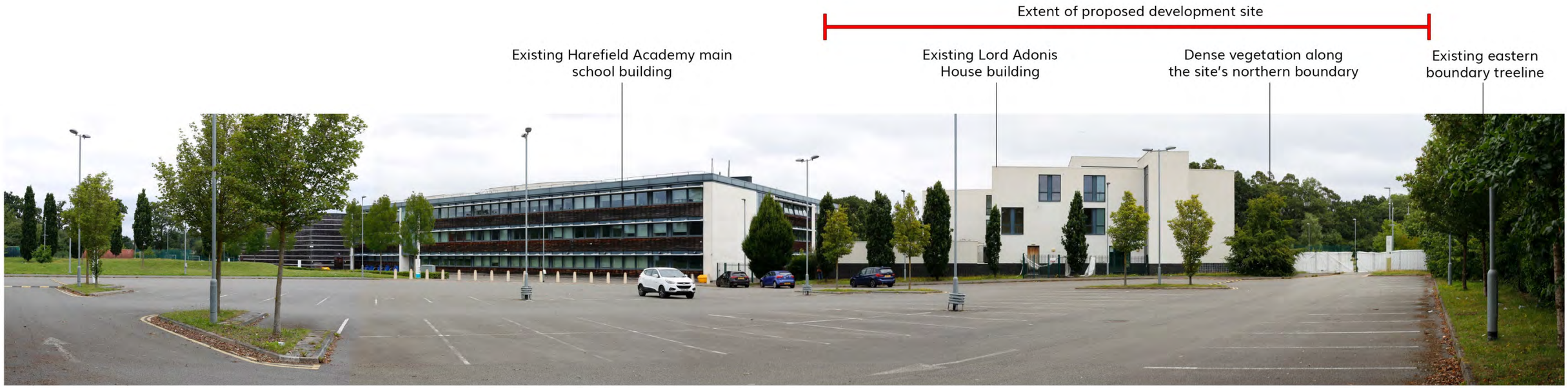
The scheme seeks to retain existing trees where possible in order to provide a greater level of visual screening at lower levels and act to integrate new development within the surrounding residential area. Two for one replacement tree planting, in excess of those being removed, and 59m of hedge planting will also add natural capital and visual amenity value.

11 Appendices

11.1 Appendix A – Photo Viewpoint Analysis

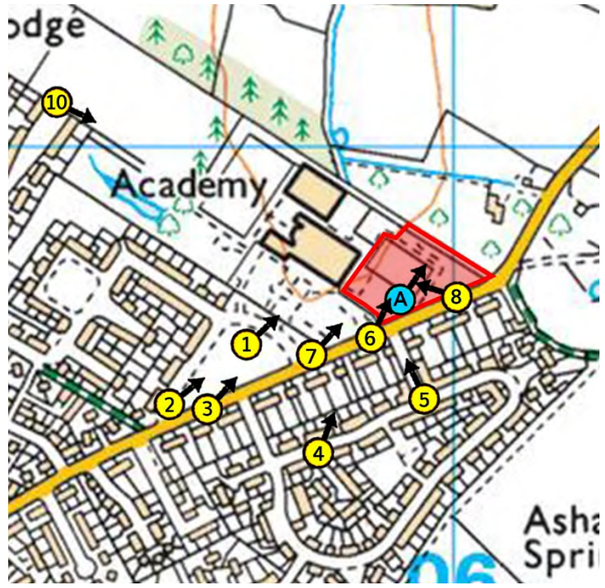
Context Viewpoint A

Taken from the existing Harefield Academy car park looking north-east towards the proposed site.



Viewpoint 1

Location of viewpoint: Taken from the triangular green space adjacent to Northwood Way, south-west of the proposed site. Looking north-east.



Description of view: Amenity grass can be seen in the foreground with some trees visible along the edge of the open green space. Parked cars are visible in the midground, as well as mature boundary vegetation along the existing boundary of Harefield Academy. Both the main Harefield Academy and Lord Adonis House buildings can be seen above existing vegetation in the background.

Visual receptor and sensitivity: People using open green space for recreation – High.

Visual effect:

Assessment timeframe	Description of predicted change	Magnitude of change	Significance
During construction (winter)	Demolition and construction activity may be seen in the background, with the Lord Adonis House building being removed and the new SEND building gradually being glimpsed above existing vegetation. The shorter SEND building is likely to be less visible in this view.	Low	Moderate to slight adverse
1 year following completion (winter)	Construction activity will have ceased and the new SEND building will be less prominent in the view than Lord Adonis House.	Negligible	Neutral
15 years following completion (summer)	Proposed trees along the southern boundary of the site will have established, offering some additional screening. The new SEND building will be less prominent in the view than Lord Adonis House.	Negligible	Neutral

Mitigation: Proposed tree planting will act to provide some screening at lower levels along the site's southern boundary. Further mitigation will come from sympathetic design of building form and selection of materials. Visual effects will be below the significance threshold by Year 15.

Viewpoint 2

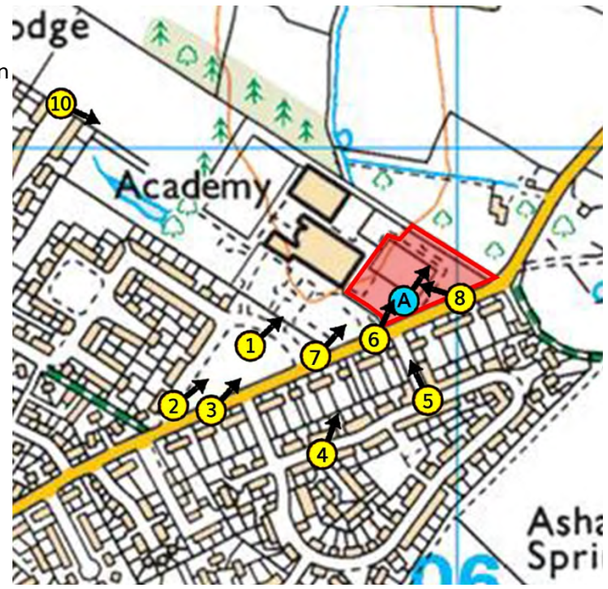
Location of viewpoint: Taken next to number 63 Northwood Way, at the southern end of the triangular green space, south-west of the proposed site. Looking north-east.

Description of view: Parked cars along Northwood Way can be seen in the foreground, with amenity grass can be seen in the midground. Trees along the edge of the open green space and boundary vegetation on the southern boundary of Harefield Academy can be seen in the background. Existing housing along Northwood Road can be seen to the right, with both the main Harefield Academy and Lord Adonis House buildings visible in above existing vegetation in the background to the centre.

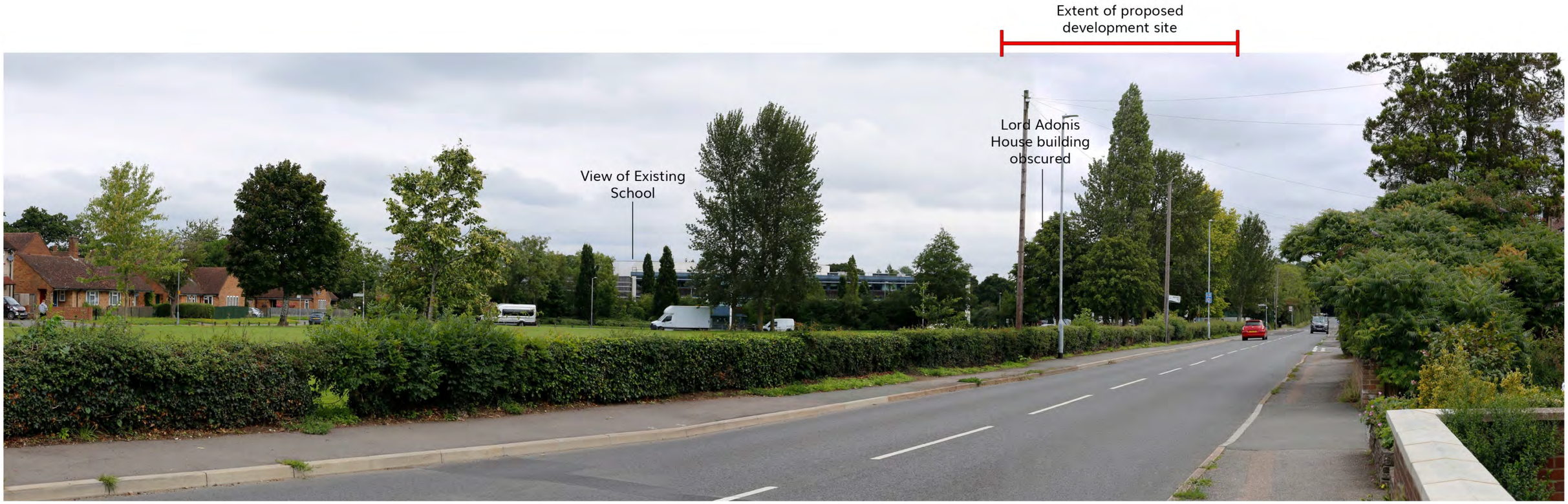
Visual receptor and sensitivity: Residents in their own homes – High.

Visual effect:

Assessment timeframe	Description of predicted change	Magnitude of change	Significance
During construction (winter)	Demolition and construction activity may be seen in the background, with the Lord Adonis House building being removed and the new SEND building gradually being glimpsed above existing vegetation. The shorter SEND building is likely to be less visible in this view.	Low	Moderate to slight adverse
1 year following completion (winter)	Construction activity will have ceased and the new SEND building will be less prominent in the view than Lord Adonis House.	Negligible	Neutral
15 years following completion (summer)	Proposed trees along the southern boundary of the site will have established, offering some additional screening. The new SEND building will be less prominent in the view than Lord Adonis House.	Negligible	Neutral



Mitigation: Proposed tree planting will act to provide some screening at lower levels along the site's southern boundary. Further mitigation will come from sympathetic design of building form and selection of materials. Visual effects will be below the significance threshold by Year 15.



Viewpoint 3

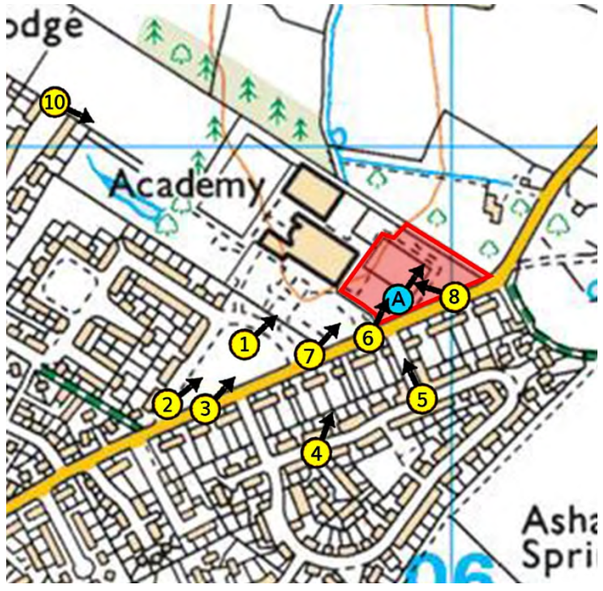
Location of viewpoint: Taken next to number 80 Northwood Road, south-west of the proposed site. Looking north-east.

Description of view: The Northwood Road roadway and footway can be seen in the foreground, with the open space hedgerow boundary also prominent in the view. Amenity grass and existing housing along Northwood Way can be seen in the background, as well as trees along the edge of the open green space and boundary vegetation on the southern boundary of Harefield Academy. The main Harefield Academy building is visible in above existing vegetation in the background to the centre, but Lord Adonis House is screened by existing vegetation.

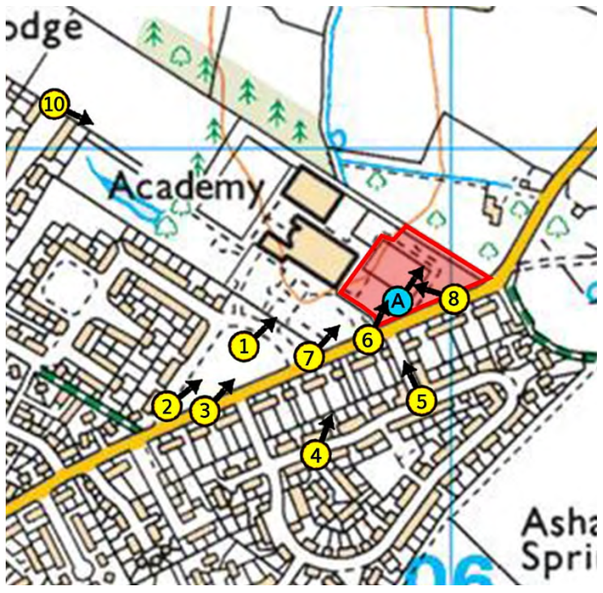
Visual receptor and sensitivity: Residents in their own homes – High. Road users in vehicles – medium.

Visual effect:

Assessment timeframe	Description of predicted change	Magnitude of change	Significance
During construction (winter)	Most elements of construction and demolition are likely to screened by existing vegetation. The new SEND building is not likely to be visible.	Negligible	Neutral
1 year following completion (winter)	Construction activity will have ceased and the new SEND building will not be visible.	No change	None
15 years following completion (summer)	The new SEND building will not be visible.	No change	None



Mitigation: No mitigation required.



Viewpoint 4

Location of viewpoint: Taken close to number 2 Ash Close, south of the proposed site. Looking north.

Description of view: Existing residential properties along Ash Grove are prominent in the view, with some back garden trees visible in the background.

Visual receptor and sensitivity: Residents in their own homes – High.

Visual effect:

Assessment timeframe	Description of predicted change	Magnitude of change	Significance
During construction (winter)	All elements of construction and demolition are likely to screened by existing properties. The new SEND building is not likely to be visible.	No change	None
1 year following completion (winter)	Construction activity will have ceased and the new SEND building will not be visible.	No change	None
15 years following completion (summer)	The new SEND building will not be visible.	No change	None

Mitigation: No mitigation required.

Viewpoint 5

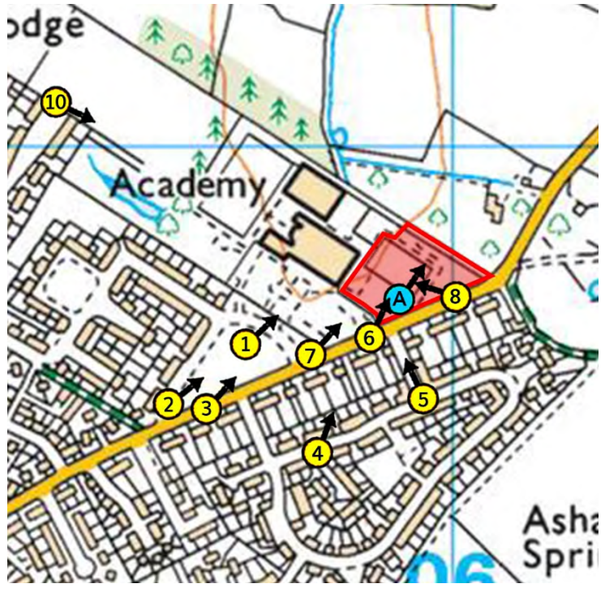
Location of viewpoint: Taken close to number 36 Ash Close, south of the proposed site. Looking north.

Description of view: Existing residential properties and front garden vegetation along Ash Grove are prominent in the view. A spur of the Ash Grove roadway leads back to a view of Lord Adonis House in the background, beyond existing vegetation on the south-eastern boundary of the site.

Visual receptor and sensitivity: Residents in their own homes – High. Road users in vehicles – medium.

Visual effect:

Assessment timeframe	Description of predicted change	Magnitude of change	Significance
During construction (winter)	Demolition and construction activity will be seen in the background, with the Lord Adonis House building being removed and the new SEND building gradually becoming visible above existing vegetation. The shorter SEND building is likely to be less visible in this view.	Low	Moderate to slight adverse
1 year following completion (winter)	Construction activity will have ceased and the new SEND building will be less prominent in the view than Lord Adonis House.	Negligible	Neutral
15 years following completion (summer)	Proposed trees along the south-eastern boundary of the site will have established, offering additional screening. The new SEND building will be less prominent in the view than Lord Adonis House.	Negligible	Neutral



Mitigation: Proposed hedge and tree planting will act to provide some screening at lower levels along the site's south-eastern boundary. Further mitigation will come from sympathetic design of building form and selection of materials. Visual effects will be below the significance threshold by Year 15.

Viewpoint 6

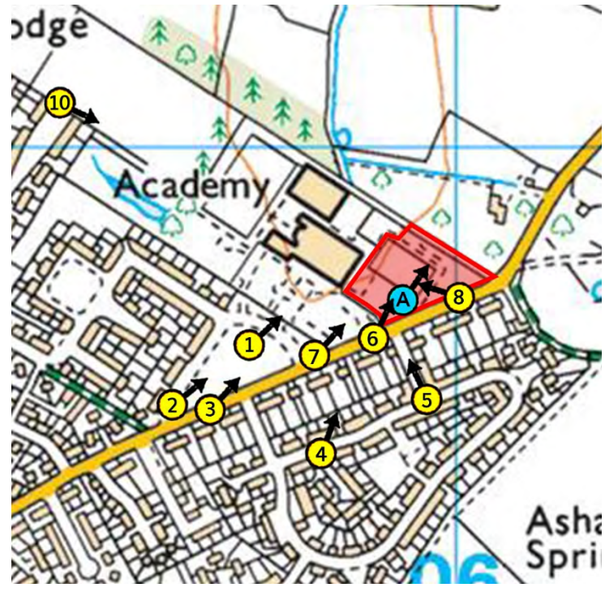
Location of viewpoint: Taken close to number 128 Northwood Road, adjacent to the southern corner of the proposed site. Looking north.

Description of view: The Northwood Road roadway and grass verge are visible in the foreground, with existing vegetation along the south-eastern boundary of the site are dominant in the view. There are glimpsed views to the Lord Adonis House building above boundary trees.

Visual receptor and sensitivity: Residents in their own homes – High. Road users in vehicles – medium.

Visual effect:

Assessment timeframe	Description of predicted change	Magnitude of change	Significance
During construction (winter)	There may be glimpses to demolition and construction activity in the background, with the Lord Adonis House building being removed and the new SEND building gradually becoming visible above existing vegetation. The shorter SEND building is likely to be less visible in this view, just seen above existing trees.	Low	Moderate to slight adverse
1 year following completion (winter)	Construction activity will have ceased and the new SEND building will be less prominent in the view than Lord Adonis House.	Negligible	Neutral
15 years following completion (summer)	Proposed trees along the south-eastern boundary of the site will have established, offering additional screening. The new SEND building will be less prominent in the view than Lord Adonis House.	Negligible	Neutral



Mitigation: Proposed hedge and tree planting will act to provide some screening at lower levels along the site's south-eastern boundary. Further mitigation will come from sympathetic design of building form and selection of materials. Visual effects will be below the significance threshold by Year 15.

Viewpoint 7

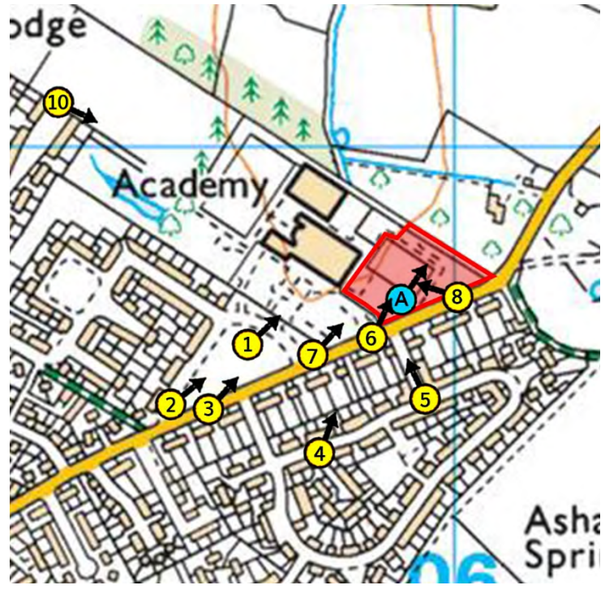
Location of viewpoint: Taken close to number 106 Northwood Road, adjacent to the southern corner of the proposed site. Looking north.

Description of view: The Northwood Road roadway, a bus stop, and grass verge are visible in the foreground. Existing fencing and vegetation along the south-eastern boundary of the Harefield Academy ate dominant in the view. There are glimpsed views to the Lord Adonis House building through boundary trees.

Visual receptor and sensitivity: Residents in their own homes – High. Road users in vehicles – medium.

Visual effect:

Assessment timeframe	Description of predicted change	Magnitude of change	Significance
During construction (winter)	There may be glimpses to demolition and construction activity in the background, with the Lord Adonis House building being removed and the new SEND building gradually becoming visible above existing vegetation. The shorter SEND building is likely to be less visible in this view, just seen above and through existing trees.	Low	Moderate to slight adverse
1 year following completion (winter)	Construction activity will have ceased and the new SEND building will be less prominent in the view than Lord Adonis House.	Negligible	Neutral
15 years following completion (summer)	Proposed trees along the southern and south-eastern boundary of the site will have established, offering additional screening. The new SEND building will be less prominent in the view than Lord Adonis House.	Negligible	Neutral



Mitigation: Proposed hedge and tree planting will act to provide some screening at lower levels along the site's southern and south-eastern boundary. Further mitigation will come from sympathetic design of building form and selection of materials. Visual effects will be below the significance threshold by Year 15.

Viewpoint 8

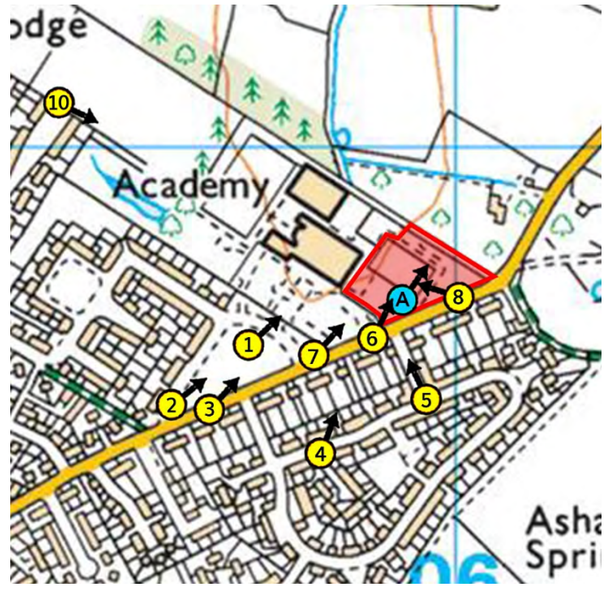
Location of viewpoint: Taken close to number 148 Northwood Road, adjacent to the south-eastern corner of the proposed site. Looking west.

Description of view: The Northwood Road footway, roadway, and grass verge are visible in the foreground, with existing vegetation and fencing along the south-eastern boundary of the site are dominant in the view. There are glimpsed views to the Lord Adonis House building above boundary trees. An existing turning head is also visible.

Visual receptor and sensitivity: Residents in their own homes – High. Road users in vehicles – medium.

Visual effect:

Assessment timeframe	Description of predicted change	Magnitude of change	Significance
During construction (winter)	The existing turning head will become a new access point for the SEND school, requiring localised tree removal. Demolition and construction activity will be visible in the background, with the Lord Adonis House building being removed and the new SEND building gradually becoming seen through the gap in boundary vegetation. The new SEND building will appear in the background.	Medium to low	Moderate adverse
1 year following completion (winter)	Construction activity will have ceased and the new SEND building will appear in the background through the gap in boundary vegetation.	Low	Slight adverse
15 years following completion (summer)	Proposed trees along the south-eastern boundary of the site will have established, offering some screening at lower levels. The new SEND building will appear in the background.	Low to negligible	Slight adverse to neutral



Mitigation: Proposed hedge and tree planting will act to provide some screening at lower levels along the site's south-eastern boundary. Further mitigation will come from sympathetic design of building form and selection of materials. Visual effects will be below the significance threshold by Year 15.

Viewpoint 9

Location of viewpoint: Taken from PRoW U11 east of the site, looking west.

Description of view: An arable field dominates the foreground, with dense vegetation visible to the right. There are views to the back of existing housing along Ash Grove in the background.

Visual receptor and sensitivity: PRoW users – High.

Visual effect:

Assessment timeframe	Description of predicted change	Magnitude of change	Significance
During construction (winter)	All elements of construction and demolition are likely to screened by existing properties and vegetation. The new SEND building is not likely to be visible.	No change	None
1 year following completion (winter)	Construction activity will have ceased and the new SEND building will not be visible.	No change	None
15 years following completion (summer)	The new SEND building will not be visible.	No change	None

Mitigation: No mitigation required.

Viewpoint 10

Location of viewpoint: Taken close to number 31 Hall Drive, north-west of the proposed site. Looking south-east.

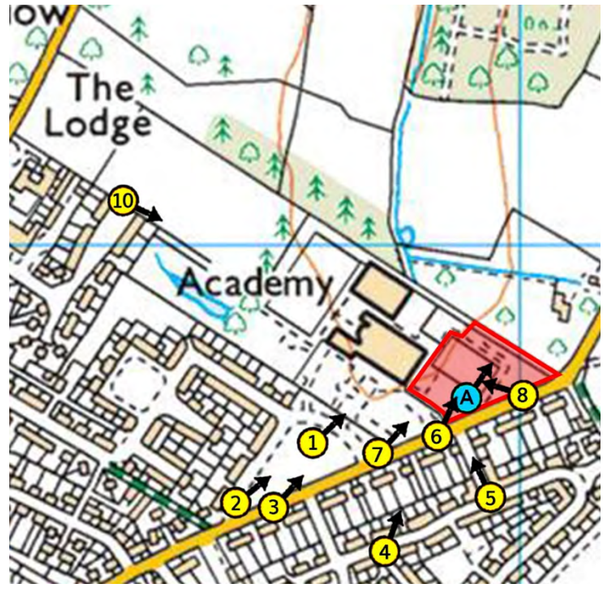
Description of view: A small area of grass and existing residential properties along Hall Drive are prominent in the view. Weldmesh fencing along the boundary to the Harefield Academy sports fields can be seen to the left, with sports pitches and existing trees visible beyond.

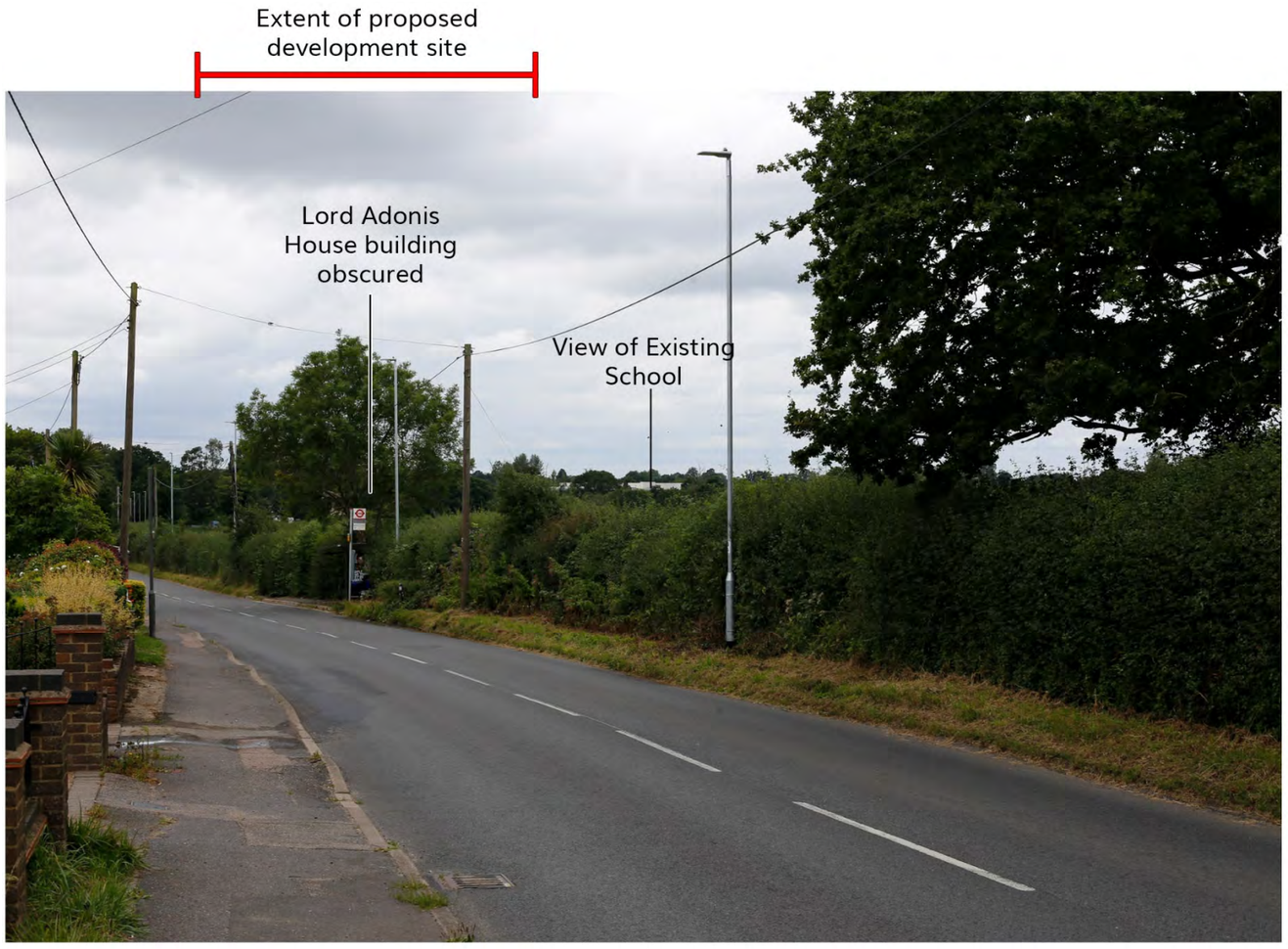
Visual receptor and sensitivity: Residents in their own homes – High.

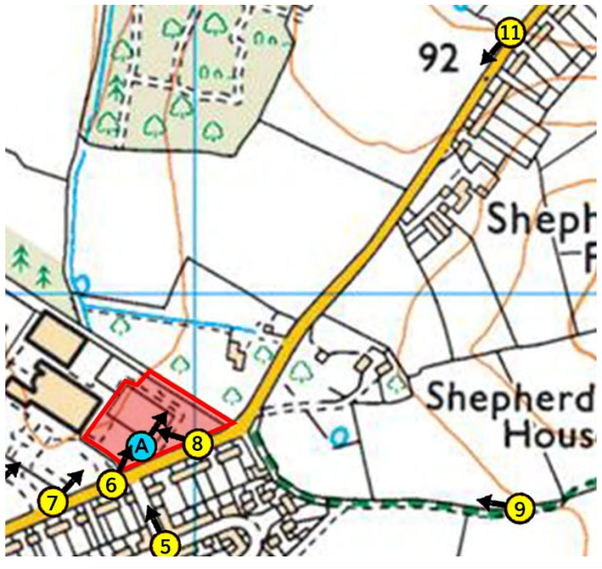
Visual effect:

Assessment timeframe	Description of predicted change	Magnitude of change	Significance
During construction (winter)	All elements of construction and demolition are likely to screened by existing properties and vegetation. The new SEND building is not likely to be visible.	No change	None
1 year following completion (winter)	Construction activity will have ceased and the new SEND building will not be visible.	No change	None
15 years following completion (summer)	The new SEND building will not be visible.	No change	None

Mitigation: No mitigation required.







Viewpoint 11

Location of viewpoint: Taken close to number 250 Northwood Road, north-east of the proposed site. Looking south-west.

Description of view: The Northwood Road footway and roadway are visible in the foreground, with existing field boundary vegetation seen to the right of the view. There are glimpsed views to the main Harefield Academy building above boundary trees, but the Lord Adonis House building is obscured by trees.

Visual receptor and sensitivity: Residents in their own homes – High. Road users in vehicles – medium.

Visual effect:

Assessment timeframe	Description of predicted change	Magnitude of change	Significance
During construction (winter)	Existing vegetation is likely to screen all construction activity.	No change	None
1 year following completion (winter)	Existing vegetation is likely to screen all elements of proposed development.	No change	None
15 years following completion (summer)	Existing vegetation is likely to screen all elements of proposed development.	No change	None

Mitigation: No mitigation required.

Viewpoint 12

Location of viewpoint: Taken from PRoW U11 far east of the site, looking west.

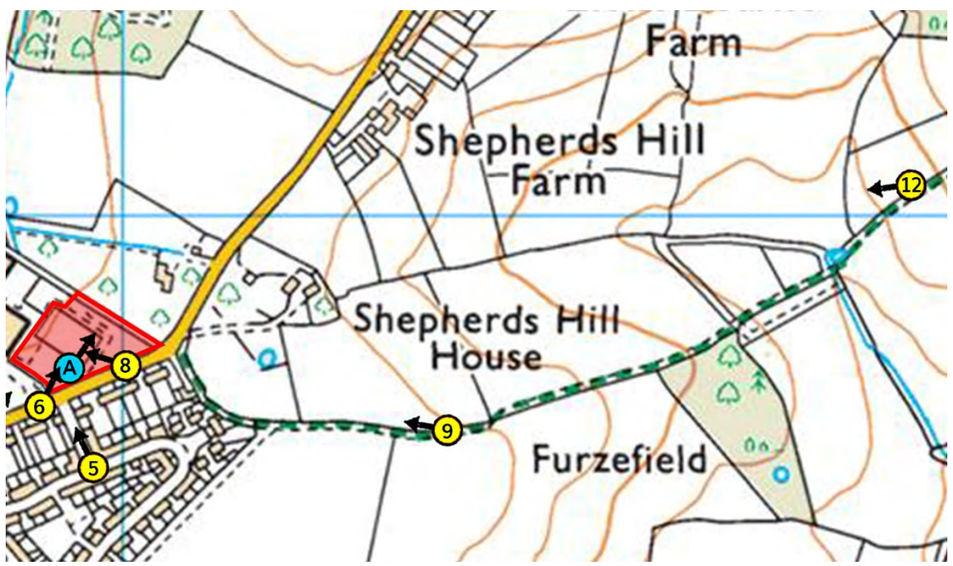
Description of view: Various arable fields, boundary fences, and lines of field boundary vegetation are visible.

Visual receptor and sensitivity: PRoW users – High.

Visual effect:

Assessment timeframe	Description of predicted change	Magnitude of change	Significance
During construction (winter)	Existing vegetation is likely to screen all construction activity.	No change	None
1 year following completion (winter)	Existing vegetation is likely to screen all elements of proposed development.	No change	None
15 years following completion (summer)	Existing vegetation is likely to screen all elements of proposed development.	No change	None

Mitigation: No mitigation required.



11.2 Appendix B – Methodology

Assessment of the potential landscape and visual effects arising from the proposed scheme has been undertaken in accordance with guidance published in 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' Third Edition (Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Assessment, 2013). This process aims to identify and assess the potential effects of a development on the landscape resource and the visual environment.

Landscape Baseline (The Existing Site and Context)

- Outline the planning policy context, including any landscape designations.

- Establish the landscape baseline through a site visit and an assessment of published Landscape Character Assessments to identify the value of the landscape resource (receptor), at community, local, national or international levels where appropriate.

The landscape baseline will help to establish the sensitivity and quality of the existing landscape [Table 1 and 2].

Table 1: Methodology for Sensitivity Assessment
Landscape sensitivity is defined as a combination of the landscape quality of the receptor and its capacity to accommodate change without significant effects on its components or overall character. Highly valued landscapes may have local or national designations, but many landscapes are valued by their communities for different reasons without being formal designated as a high quality or highly valued landscape. The condition of the landscape and its level of intactness within a character type are important factors in assessing sensitivity. The assessment of the landscape quality of an area is based on professional judgement about the characteristics and the overall condition and integrity of the landscape. The assessment will be informed by studies published by competent authorities such as the local planning authority and Natural England and by study of the elements which make up the landscape: - Physical influences such as geology, soils, landform, drainage and water bodies - Land cover and ecology - The influence of human activity including land use, landscape management, the pattern of infrastructure and development, enclosure and field types The aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the area will be taken into account – for example its scale, openness or enclosure, tranquillity or wildness. It usually follows that higher quality landscapes are more sensitive to change: but this is not always the case. It will depend on the type of change proposed and its appropriateness in the landscape and the capacity of the landscape to absorb the change. Table 2 summarises the definitions used for defining the quality and sensitivity of the landscape, using the methodology from the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 2013.

Table 2: Landscape Value Criteria	
Landscape value	**Definition**
Very high / international designation	Landscapes with exceptional scenic quality with strong structure, distinct features and under appropriate and robust management. Very few detracting features. Typically considered attractive by most people and highly valued. Likely to have international designations such as a world heritage site.
High / national	Exceptional scenic quality and containing many attractive features with no visually intrusive elements. Vegetation cover in good condition and well maintained. Considered attractive by most people. Often designated at a national level such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks.
Medium/ regional	Attractive landscapes, well maintained but with some minor blemishes such as unattractive buildings. Designations as regional, county or district importance such as Areas of great Landscape Value, Conservation Areas, Local Nature Reserves
High/local	Reasonably attractive landscapes with some attractive features and a few intrusive elements. Variable condition of vegetation and lacking in local designations but nevertheless of value to the local area.
Medium/local	Pleasant but ordinary landscapes with intrusive elements including infrastructure and unattractive buildings. Poor vegetation structure and management. Typified by urban fringes.
Low/local	Landscape with severely damaged structure and degraded features. Many unattractive and intrusive features and landscape elements removed such as woodland or hedges. Typical of urban fringe and abandoned industrial sites.

- Identify the extent of visual receptors within the study area, with the use of Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) where appropriate and establish the number and sensitivity of the representative viewpoint and/or groups of people (receptors) within the study area whose views may be altered as a result of the proposals. Visual receptor sensitivity will be assessed using the criteria below. Photographic evidence of these viewpoints will be recorded on a site visit and included within the assessment stages of the LVIA.

Table 3: Visual Receptor Sensitivity	
High	People in residential properties with direct or open views Users of public rights of way with closed, open or direct views
Medium	People in residential properties with indirect, oblique or glimpsed views People using local footpaths for recreational activities with indirect or glimpsed views Motorists using the local road network
Low	Road users on high speed roads People at work

The Effect of the Proposed Development

The level of effect on both landscape and visual receptors should be identified in respect of the proposed development. In order to assess the significance of the effect on the receiving environment, the landscape and visibility will be assessed using magnitude and sensitivity criteria. The magnitude of change is established by considering;

The amount of land lost to development which contributes to the prevailing landscape character

- The loss or change in landscape elements which contribute to landscape character
- The extent, duration and permanence of change
- The extent to which change is direct or secondary i.e. not a direct result of the development

Criteria used to assess the magnitude of visual change:

Table 4: Visual Magnitude of Change	
High	A major change or obstruction of a view that may be directly visible, appearing as a prominent feature and appearing in the foreground.
Medium	A moderate change or partial view of a new element within the view that may be readily noticed, directly or obliquely visible including glimpsed, partly screened or intermittent views, appearing as a noticeable feature in the middle ground.
Low	A low level of change, affecting a small part of the view that may be obliquely viewed or partly screened and or appearing in the background landscape. May include moving views at speed.
Negligible	A negligible level of change affecting a very small part of the view that may be heavily screened or appearing in the distance. May include moving views at speed where the change will be very difficult to notice.

Criteria used to assess the magnitude of landscape change:

Table 5: Magnitude of Landscape Change	
High	Change that may be large in scale and extent, including the loss of key landscape elements and features or the addition of new uncharacteristic elements or features, leading to a change in the overall landscape character
Medium	Partial loss or alteration to one or more key features of the baseline landscape character. Elements of change may have prominence but are not considered to be substantially uncharacteristic in the existing landscape.
Low	A low level of change typically affecting smaller areas of specific landscape character, including the loss of characteristic elements or features or the addition of new features or elements considered to be uncharacteristic.
Negligible	A negligible level of change affecting small areas of landscape character and quality, including the loss of some landscape elements or the addition of features or elements which are either characteristic of the existing landscape or hardly noticeable.

Criteria used to assess the significance of landscape effects:

Table 6: Significance Criteria for Landscape Effects	
Severe adverse	The proposed scheme would result in effects which: • Are at complete variance with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape • Would permanently degrade or destroy the integrity of valued features • Would cause a very high-quality landscape to be permanently changed
Major adverse	The proposed scheme would result in effects that • Cannot be fully mitigated and may cumulatively amount to a severe adverse effect • Are at a considerable variance to the landscape • Will be substantially damaging to a high-quality landscape
Moderate adverse	• Be out of scale with the landscape or at odds with the local pattern and landform • Will leave an adverse effect on a landscape of recognised quality
Minor adverse	The proposed scheme would • Not quite fit into the landform and scale of the landscape • Affect an area of recognised landscape character
Neutral	The proposed scheme would; • Fit in with the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape • Maintain existing landscape quality
Minor beneficial	The proposed scheme would; • Improve the landscape quality and character • Complement the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape
Moderate beneficial	The proposed scheme would have the potential to • Fit very well with the landscape character • Improve the quality of the landscape
Major beneficial	The proposed scheme would have the potential to • Integrate seamlessly with the landscape character • Considerably improve the quality of the landscape

Significance of Landscape and Visual Effects

To evaluate the significance of effect, the 'Magnitude of Change' and 'Sensitivity' of landscape resource (or visual receptor) is combined in order to judge the predicted level of effect. The predicted landscape or visual effect is based upon professional judgement and reported descriptions ranging from 'substantial' to 'negligible'.

The magnitude of change combined with sensitivity of visual receptor = the level of effect. Determining the 'threshold' at which an effect is potentially unacceptable requires the application of systematic, consistent, professional judgement. The following table summarises the principle and it has a role in providing a consistent basis for the application of professional judgement.

Table 7 Significance of Landscape and Visual Effects				
Magnitude of Change	**Landscape and Visual Sensitivity**			
	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
High	Substantial	Moderate/ Substantial	Moderate	Slight/ Moderate
Medium	Moderate/ Substantial	Moderate	Slight/ Moderate	Slight
Low	Moderate	Slight/ Moderate	Slight	Negligible
Negligible	Slight	Slight/Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

Key:		Significant
		Not significant

Mitigation of Effects and Conclusion

Mitigation measures are described as those measures, including any process or activity, designed to prevent/ avoid and compensate/remedy any significant adverse landscape and/ or visual effects of the proposed development.

Measures to mitigate the effects of the proposed development will be suggested in this section. This often relates to soft landscaping and building design and colour.