



**STEPHENSON
HALLIDAY**

Planning, Landscape & Environment
an **RSK** company

LIDL HILLINGDON

Townscape and Visual Appraisal

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Document history

| | Name | Date |
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Stephenson Halliday, an RSK Group Company, was commissioned in April 2024 to prepare a townscape and visual appraisal (TVA) of the proposed development at land off Freezeland Way, Hillingdon on behalf of Lidl Great Britain Limited. This appraisal forms part of a suite of documents supporting the application for this development proposal.
- 1.1.2 This TVA defines the existing townscape and visual baseline environments; appraises their sensitivity to change; describes the key townscape and visual related aspects of the Proposed Development; and describes the nature of the anticipated changes and appraises the effects arising during construction and operation. It should be noted that the European Landscape Convention's (ELC's) definition of landscape is all encompassing and inter alia includes townscape. Therefore use the terms interchangeably in the report and this appendix. For full wording from the ELC, please see Appendix 3.
- 1.1.3 The TVA considers the potential effects upon:
- townscape fabric;
 - townscape character;
 - the special qualities of any townscape designations; and
 - visual receptors including residential, transport and recreational receptors.
- 1.1.4 The TVA has been undertaken in accordance with published best practice; namely the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition), Landscape Institute and IEMA 2013 (GLVIA3) and associated technical guidance notes published by the Landscape Institute (referenced as appropriate in Appendix 6).
- 1.1.5 Although linked, townscape and visual effects are considered separately. Townscape effects derive from changes in the townscape fabric, which may result in changes to the character, whereas visual effects are the effect of these changes as experienced by people (visual receptors). Effects on the setting of any heritage assets are dealt with as part of a separate heritage report.

1.2 The Site and Proposals

- 1.2.1 Figure 1 places the proposed development within its local context. The site is currently disused and covered with regenerating vegetation following its former use as a works (shown on historic mapping). The proposal involves the addition of a building to comprise a supermarket and self storage and associated access road, car park, lighting, public realm and landscape treatments.

1.3 Competence

- 1.3.1 This report has been prepared by Chartered Landscape Architects at Stephenson Halliday. The Practice has over 24 years of experience working on commercial and retail proposals throughout the UK. Key individuals working on this project have over 11 years of experience in landscape architecture and include chartered landscape architects.
- 1.3.2 The Practice is a Landscape Institute and IEMA registered practice and all work is prepared and reviewed internally by senior highly experienced landscape planners with Public Inquiry experience.
- 1.3.3 To inform the appraisal, a site visit was made to various locations within the study area including, but not restricted to, representative viewpoints by Stephenson Halliday's appraisal team during May 2024.

1.4 Stakeholder Consultation

- 1.4.1 Stephenson Halliday have not sought any form of consultation with regards the Proposed Development, e.g. to consult on viewpoint locations. This is partially due to the short delivery timescale which meant that the site visit needed to be expedited and available time to wait for a response was limited. The site is an allocated site and thus the principle of development upon it is accepted. In addition, due to the limited area in which the proposed development would potentially be seen, as demonstrated in Figure 5, there was a very limited number of available viewpoint locations, the majority of which have already been captured within this appraisal.

1.5 Study Area

- 1.5.1 It is accepted practice within townscape and visual appraisal work that the extent of the study area for a development proposal is broadly defined by the visual envelope of the proposed development. In this case a study area of 2km has been used (as shown by Figure 1). This study area is considered proportionate to the scale of the project and is adequate to identify all non-negligible effects on landscape and views. This is due to the presence of built form and vegetation around the site and the density of the townscape which in practice restrict visibility of the proposed development to the immediate vicinity of the site, with brief views in from further afield (up to 2km from the site boundary).

1.6 Report Structure and Terminology

- 1.6.1 This report is structured as set out in the table of contents.
- 1.6.2 This appraisal relates to a predominantly urban area and in this context the term 'townscape' is generally more applicable than 'landscape'. Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition (GLVIA3) defines townscape as "... *the landscape within the built-up area, including the buildings, the relationship between them, the different types of urban open spaces, including green spaces and the relationship between buildings and open spaces.*" GLVIA3 does not differentiate between approaches to assessment for areas of landscape and townscape and in this appraisal the word 'landscape' should be taken to include 'townscape' and vice versa.

- 1.6.3 Supporting appendices have been prepared that supplement the sections regarding methodology, planning policy and baseline. The appendices are important to the appraisal and should be read alongside this report.
- 1.6.4 Key terms used within the appraisal are described in Section 2 and Appendix 1 which set out the methodology. A glossary is provided within Appendix 1.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1.1 This section provides a summary of the methodology adopted for the TVA. Full details of the appraisal methodology, including appraisal criteria, are provided in Appendix 1.

2.1.2 In accordance with GLVIA3, the level of townscape and visual effects is determined by considering, in tandem, the sensitivity of townscape and visual receptors (townscape elements, townscape character areas, townscape designations and groups of people who may be affected by changes in visual amenity) and the magnitude of effect arising from the Proposed Development.

2.2 Sensitivity

2.2.1 Sensitivity (described as High, Medium or Low) is judged by combining component judgements about the value and susceptibility of the receptor, as illustrated in Table 2.1 and Table 2.2. An explanation of how susceptibility and value has been determined is provided in Appendix 1. Detailed susceptibility and value criteria for landscape receptors are established in Appendix 1 whilst detailed visual susceptibility and value criteria are set out in Appendix 1. It should be noted that intermediate assessments of value or susceptibility may be applied (e.g. High/Medium, Medium/Low or National/Regional, Regional/Community). Likewise, when combining susceptibility and value to determine sensitivity, an intermediate assessment is adopted where overall sensitivity is judged to lie between levels. In all instances, professional judgement is employed, and the tables below should not be interpreted rigidly to give a specific answer. A slightly greater weight is given to susceptibility in judging the sensitivity of visual receptors. This is due to the susceptibility taking into account the level of interest that the visual receptors have in their surroundings.

Table 2.1 Landscape Sensitivity

| LANDSCAPE RECEPTORS | | Susceptibility | | |
|---------------------|-----------|----------------|-------------|------------|
| | | High | Medium | Low |
| Value | National | High | High/Medium | Medium |
| | Regional | High/Medium | Medium | Medium/Low |
| | Community | Medium | Medium/Low | Low |

Table 2.2 Visual Sensitivity

| VISUAL RECEPTORS | | Susceptibility | | |
|------------------|-----------|----------------|-------------|------------|
| | | High | Medium | Low |
| Value | National | High | High/Medium | Medium |
| | Regional | High/Medium | High/Medium | Medium/Low |
| | Community | High/Medium | Medium | Low |

2.3 Magnitude

- 2.3.1 The magnitude of effect arising from the Proposed Development (described as Substantial, Moderate, Slight or Negligible) is assessed in terms of its scale, geographic extent of the area or receptor that is influenced and its duration.
- 2.3.2 Scale of change (expressed as Large, Medium, Small, Negligible) is the first and primary factor in determining magnitude. Geographical extent and duration of the effect are modifying factors to the overall magnitude judgement which may be higher if the effect is particularly widespread and/or long lasting, or lower if it is constrained in geographic extent and/or timescale.
- 2.3.3 The diagrams presented below in Plate 1 below illustrate in outline how these two modifying factors are considered in a two-stage process and further explanation is provided in Appendix 1. Plate 1 is not intended to be interpreted rigidly as a chart to provide definitive answers; professional judgement is employed as appropriate to arrive at an overall judgement on the magnitude of effect. A definition of the terms used in the diagrams in Plate 1 is provided in Appendix 1.
- 2.3.4 Where magnitude of effect (or other judgements) is judged to lie between levels, an intermediate assessment is adopted and is expressed as e.g. Moderate/slight.

Plate 1 - Illustration of how Magnitude of Effect is Established

Stage 1 - Modifying Influence of Geographic Extent on Magnitude of Effect



Stage 2 - Modifying Influence of Duration on Magnitude of Effect



2.4 Level of Effects

- 2.4.1 The level of a townscape or visual effect (described as Major, Moderate, Minor or Negligible) is assessed using professional judgement, combining the sensitivity of the receptor with the predicted magnitude of effect, as summarised in Table 2.3. Table 2.3 is not used as a prescriptive tool and illustrates the typical outcomes, allowing for the exercise of professional judgement. In some instances, a particular parameter may be considered as having a determining effect on the analysis. Where significance is judged to lie between levels, an intermediate assessment will be adopted for example 'Moderate/Minor'. Such a judgement indicates that the significance of effect is less than Moderate but more than Minor.

Table 2.3 Level of effect

| | | Magnitude of Effect | | | |
|----------------------|--------|---------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| | | Substantial | Moderate | Slight | Negligible |
| Receptor Sensitivity | High | Major | Major/Moderate | Moderate | Minor |
| | Medium | Major/Moderate | Moderate | Moderate/Minor | Minor/Negligible |
| | Low | Moderate | Moderate/Minor | Minor | Negligible |

Beneficial/Adverse

- 2.4.2 Townscape and visual effects can be beneficial or adverse and, in some instances, may be considered neutral. Neutral effects are those which overall are neither adverse nor positive but may incorporate a combination of both. Whether an effect is beneficial, neutral or adverse is identified based on professional judgement.
- 2.4.3 However, for the avoidance of doubt, in this appraisal it has been assumed that where new infrastructure is introduced into the townscape or views, this will generally constitute an adverse effect. Any variation from this stance will be clearly justified.

2.5 Cumulative Assessment

- 2.5.1 Cumulative assessment relates to the assessment of the effects of more than one development, i.e. the additional or in combination effects of the developments on the townscape and visual receptors. Cumulative assessment essential uses the same methodology as for the main TVA.
- 2.5.2 The 'Master Brewer motel' site on the eastern side of the A437 Long Lane (LPA ref. 4266/APP/2019/3088) has been identified within close proximity to the site as a proposed development that may result in cumulative effects in conjunction with the scheme. The site has planning permission, and the cumulative assessment will consider likely effects should both that proposal and the proposed development proceed.

2.6 Residential Amenity

- 2.6.1 As set out within LI Technical Guidance Note 02//19 'Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA)':

"Changes in views and visual amenity are considered in the planning process. In respect of private views and visual amenity, it is widely known that no one has 'a right to a view.' ...

It is not uncommon for significant adverse effects on views and visual amenity to be experienced by people at their place of residence as a result of introducing a new development into the landscape. In itself this does not necessarily cause particular planning concern. However, there are situations where the effect on the outlook / visual amenity of a residential property is so great that it is not generally considered to be in the public interest to permit such conditions to occur where they did not exist before."

- 2.6.2 This report does not include an assessment of residential visual amenity as it is judged that the potential limited visual effects of the proposed development would not give rise to effects meeting the threshold described above due to separation distances and screening by intervening built form.

2.7 Distances

- 2.7.1 Where distances are given in the appraisal, these are approximate distances between the nearest part of the site and the nearest part of the receptor in question, unless explicitly stated otherwise.

2.8 Visual Aids

- 2.8.1 Photographs of the existing views are shown in a separate document which accompanies the application. The method of visualisation selected has been informed by Landscape Institute Technical Note 06/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals¹, with annotated photographs (Type 1 Visualisations) being selected as being the most appropriate approach given the nature of the proposed development and the existing urban context. The methodology of production for the visualisations is described in Appendix 2.

3 PLANNING POLICY

3.1 National Planning Policy

- 3.1.1 Relevant national planning policy is set out in Appendix 3.

¹ Technical Guidance Note 6/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals. Landscape Institute (2019).

3.2 Local Planning Policy

3.2.1 Current local planning policy is described in the following adopted and emerging policy documents:

- The London Plan (March 2021); and
- Hillingdon Local Plan Part 1 (November 2012) and Part 2 (January 2020).

3.2.2 The proposed buildings are not higher than 30m and are not significantly taller than their surroundings/context, and thus do not meet the definitions of 'Tall Buildings' provided in the London and Hillingdon Plans. Tall buildings policies are not considered relevant to this assessment. Policies of relevance to this assessment are outlined below:

The London Plan, March 2021

3.2.3 Relevant policies include:

- **Policy D1 London's form, character and capacity for growth** – which sets out the need for definition of character by borough councils in order to understand capacity for growth and use the characteristics to inform development plans.
- **Policy D4 Delivering good design** – establishes the need of borough councils to ensure a high-quality design and place-making.
- **Policy HC3 Strategic and Local Views** – aims to protect designated strategic and local views which help to define London. This policy is supported by further guidance within the London View Management Framework discussed within section 3.3.2 below.
- **Policy HC4 London View Management Framework** – adds detail to Policy HC3 in development management terms such as how to protect and manage designated views.
- **Policy G1 Green infrastructure** – aims to protect and enhance the green infrastructure within London.
- **Policy G2 London's Green Belt** – Aims to protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development.
- **Policy G5 Urban greening** – which aims to ensure that new developments contribute to the greening of London.

Hillingdon Local Plan Part 1: Strategic Policies, 2012

3.2.4 Policies of relevance to this appraisal include:

- **Policy HE1 Heritage** – aims to ensure that heritage assets including Areas of Special Local Character are protected.
- **Policy HE2 Built Environment** – emphasises the importance of achieving high quality design which enhances local distinctiveness; as well as being appropriate to the identity

and context of townscapes and landscapes including making a positive contribution to scale, layout and materials.

- **Policy EM2 Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land and Green Chains** – aims to ensure the continuing benefits brought about by Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land and Green Chains in providing openness.

Hillingdon Local Plan Part 2: Development Management Policies, 2020

3.2.5 Part 2 of the Hillingdon Local Plan covers policies related to development management in more detail. Policies of relevance to this appraisal include:

- **Policy DMHB5 Areas of Special Local Character** – aims to ensure that the character of Areas of Special Local Character (ASLC) is protected.
- **Policy DMHB11 Design of New Development** – sets out design principles including responding to local context to ensure high-quality design proposals for new development.
- **Policy DMHB12 Streets and Public Realm** – applies the required principles of high-quality design to streetscapes and public realm, including the need to take account of the established townscape character and quality.
- **Policy DMHB14 Trees and Landscaping** – requires the retention or enhancement of existing landscape treatments including trees and the provision of a hard and soft landscape scheme which is appropriate to the character of the area.
- **Policy DMEI6 Development in Green Edge Locations** – aims to ensure the continuing benefits brought about by Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land and Green Chains in providing openness by requiring developers to assimilate new development in green edge locations into the surrounding landscape by using extensive buffer planting on site peripheries.

Hillingdon Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Designations, 2020

3.2.6 The site sits within Site A of the Master Brewer and Hillingdon Circus allocated site from the Part 2 Local Plan. Policies of relevance to this appraisal include:

- **Policy SA14 Master Brewer and Hillingdon Circus, Hillingdon** – sets out the requirements for development on the allocated Site A. This includes the need to ensure that the scale of any retail or leisure development is in keeping with North Hillingdon's status as a Local Centre, and secure substantial planting and landscaping in association with any development. It also includes the need to provide environmental improvements and landscaping as necessary to enhance the local shopping and residential environment. In addition, the policy notes the need for proposals across Sites A and B to be of a scale in keeping with the Local Centre and to provide a comprehensive development scheme across both sites.

3.3 Local Guidance

- 3.3.1 In addition to the policy documents identified above, there are relevant local guidance and baseline documents as follows:
- London View Management Framework (LVMF), March 2012;
 - Hillingdon Landscape Character Assessment (HLCA), May 2012;
 - Hillingdon Townscape Character Assessment, October 2023; and
 - South Buckinghamshire District Landscape Character Assessment, 2011.
- 3.3.2 The LVMF has been reviewed and the site is not within or the focus of any of the view corridors or protected vistas. In addition, there are no apparent identified local view corridors within planning policy from the London Borough of Hillingdon Council. Therefore, the LVMF is not considered further within this appraisal.
- 3.3.3 Given that South Buckinghamshire District sits approximately 2km west of the site boundary and there is no anticipated intervisibility with the proposed development due to intervening built form, no notable effects are anticipated within the landscape character areas. The SBDC Landscape Character Assessment is therefore also not taken forward for further consideration.

4 BASELINE

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 An overview of the baseline study results is provided in this section with the full baseline description of the individual townscape and visual receptors being provided alongside the assessment in section 6 for ease of reference.
- 4.1.2 This section provides a review of the key local baseline studies and guidance documents and identifies those townscape and visual receptors which merit detailed consideration in the assessment of effects, and those which are not taken forward for further assessment as effects *“have been judged unlikely to occur or so insignificant that it is not essential to consider them further”* (GLVIA3, para. 3.19).
- 4.1.3 Both this baseline section and the effects section describe townscape character and visual receptors before considering designated areas as it is common for designations to encompass both character and visual considerations within their special qualities or purposes of designation.

4.2 Local Guidance and Baseline Studies

Hillingdon Landscape Character Assessment, May 2012

- 4.2.1 This study identifies landscape character areas (LCAs) which cover most of the study area, omitting only the western edge. It provides a detailed review of each of the landscape

character areas covering their geology, topography, hydrology, land use, settlement, biodiversity, historic environment and perceptual / experiential characteristics. Effects on the character areas within the study area as a result of the proposed development are considered at section 4.4.4 below.

- 4.2.2 The study also provides strategic landscape and visual sensitivities for the LCAs, which are considered at section 5 of this appraisal in relation to the siting and design of the proposed development. They are also factored into the appraisal of effects on landscape character and visual amenity in section 6.

Hillingdon Townscape Character Assessment, October 2023

- 4.2.3 This characterisation study builds on the work undertaken in the 2012 LCA, providing a more detailed analysis of the townscape, splitting the townscape in the district into typologies which cover the urban form within the study area, omitting green and open spaces. It provides a detailed review of each of the typologies detailing their history, form, street pattern, massing/height, materials, architectural details, garden spaces and parking arrangements. Effects on the typologies within the study area as a result of the proposed development are considered at sections 4.4.2, 4.4.5 and 6.4 below.
- 4.2.4 The study also identifies issues and implications for the typologies, which are considered at section 5 of this appraisal in relation to the siting and design of the proposed development. They are also factored into the appraisal of effects on landscape character and visual amenity in section 6.

4.3 ZTV study

- 4.3.1 A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) study was generated based on the proposed design. This is shown on Figure 4 and indicates areas of potential visibility of the proposed development. The analysis was carried out using a topographic model (using OS Terrain 5 data) and including buildings and trees (with an assumed height of 7.5m for buildings and 15m for woodland) as visual barriers in order to provide a more realistic indication of potential visibility.
- 4.3.2 The ZTV study was used to aid the identification of those receptors that are likely to be most affected by the proposed development and those that do not require detailed consideration. It should be noted that some areas shown as having potential visibility may have visibility of the development screened by more recent development, and some new views may have been opened up by demolitions.
- 4.3.3 The ZTV for the proposed development shows that the main area of visibility is located in and immediately around the site, with narrow views available along surrounding roads such as the A437 Long Lane, Hercies Road and the A40 westbound exit slip road. There is also some visibility from Hillingdon Court Park south of the site, and public footpaths including the Celandine Walk (a local promoted route from the London Borough of Hillingdon Council) to the west of the site.
- 4.3.4 Existing built form and tree cover in the study area has a notable effect on visibility, restricting views of the site such that in areas of visibility only the top of the building or one end of the building would be seen. In places, site visit work indicated that screening by smaller trees in streets and parks has not been fully reflected by the modelling and that visibility is likely to be slightly less than indicated by the ZTV study.

- 4.3.5 Effects on landscape or visual receptors outside the areas of visibility shown on the ZTV study would be Negligible and are not assessed in detail.

4.4 Landscape / Townscape Character

- 4.4.1 Local landscape and townscape character areas in the study area are shown on Figure 2. Landscape character within the study area has been described in the LCA of May 2012. This report included descriptions of townscape character types; however, the townscape is categorised in more detail in the later Townscape Character Assessment of October 2023. Where areas covered by these two assessments overlap, the 2023 study takes precedent as it is the more recent and detailed assessment. Refer to Figure 2 and Figure 3 for the Landscape Character Areas (LCAs), Townscape Character Types (TCTs) and Townscape Typologies (TTs).
- 4.4.2 The site is situated within the Inter-War Suburb / Metroland TCT (2012 LCA) which comprises *“medium density residential suburbs consisting of a distinctive network of curvilinear streets (crescents), linear streets (avenues) and ‘dead ends’ (closes)”* with a *“leafy suburban character”*. The site is also situated in the Tertiary Centres TT from the 2023 study, described as *“the smallest mixed-use centres in the borough, typically covering those which are referred to as minor centres, local centres and parades in planning policy”*.
- 4.4.3 The key characteristics of the Tertiary Centres TT are as follows:
- *“Small scale retail and local service provision, typically based in small premises in older buildings.*
 - *Slightly more urban character than surrounding suburbs with terraced buildings, often taller than their context.*
 - *Many tertiary centres have their origins in historic settlements rather than in later planned developments and retain elements of historic fabric.*
 - *Most tertiary centres are located away from major transport nodes.”*
- 4.4.4 Within the 2012 LCA, the site is identified as being located in a narrow strip of townscape between two areas of River Corridor landscape character, namely G1: Upper Pinn River Corridor LCA (G1 LCA – situated 100m west of the site) and G3: Yeading Brook River Corridor LCA (G3 LCA – located 50 east of the site). Described as a low-lying flat floodplain through which the River Pinn meanders, G1 LCA is characterised by a largely recreational landscape with low settlement pattern and mosaic of habitats. It is largely contained and enclosed with a sense of tranquillity but having a strong urban character. Directly to the east of the site is G3 LCA, the Yeading Brook River Corridor. This area is typified by an industrial and commercial character.
- 4.4.5 With reference to the 2023 study and aside from the Tertiary Centres TT in which the site sits, the ZTV indicates intervisibility between the proposed development and both the Industrial / Business TT and the Large Suburban TT. Industrial / Business TT is described as a result of *“Hillingdon’s industrial legacy”* with the Grand Union Canal and railways in the borough being *“the focus for a multitude of industries supporting the capital”*. The 2023 assessment notes that *“in addition to the older industrial buildings, Hillingdon also has a stock of modern business buildings”*. The Large Suburban TT is noted in the published

assessment as being “suburban areas of the borough ... built to very low densities ... There tends to be a large degree of individuality of building style and most buildings will have been built to suit the brief of a private homeowner or a speculative developer”.

4.4.6 Effects on the following character areas are considered within section 6, with baseline description provided alongside the assessment of effects for ease of reference:

- Tertiary Centres TT (HTCA);
- Industrial / Business TT (HTCA);
- Large Suburban TT (HTCA);
- G1: Upper Pinn River Corridor LCA (HLCA); and
- G3: Yeading Brook River Corridor LCA (HLCA).

4.4.7 Apart from the five character areas described above, the combination of existing buildings, vegetation and limited visibility mean that effects will diminish rapidly with distance, and more distant character areas are therefore not considered further.

4.5 Visual Receptors

4.5.1 Visual receptors are “the different groups of people who may experience views of the development” (GLVIA, 3rd edition, para 6.3). In order to identify those groups who may be significantly affected the ZTV study, baseline desk study and site visits have been used.

4.5.2 The different types of groups assessed within this chapter encompass local residents; people using key routes such as roads and cycleways, people within accessible or recreational landscapes; people using Public Rights of Way; or people visiting key viewpoints. In dealing with areas of settlement, Public Rights of Way and local roads, receptors are grouped into areas where effects might be expected to be broadly similar, or areas which share particular factors in common.

4.5.3 Representative viewpoints have been selected to aid the assessment of effects on visual receptors.

Baseline Visual Environment

4.5.4 As shown on Figure 1, the site is located off Freezeland Way, which runs in a general east-west direction. The application site sits in a triangle of disused land between Freezeland Way, the A437 Long Lane on the northern edge of Hillingdon near its boundary with Ickenham and the Metropolitan Underground Line.

4.5.5 Freezeland Way provides a wide separation strip of four lanes of traffic creating a clear definition between the site and the tertiary centre immediately south. The junction between Freezeland Way and the A437 Long Lane (known as Hillingdon Circus) is large and complex owing to the size of these roads and the need to provide side roads for local traffic accessing the parade of shops and businesses in the tertiary centre. Around the site, buildings are mostly mid-20th century in design and materials. The tertiary centre comprises a mixture of

shops, businesses and flats in a local parade either side of the A437 Long Lane, to the south of Freezeland Way.

- 4.5.6 The A437 Long Lane north of Freezeland Way rises towards an overbridge crossing the Metropolitan Line and the adjacent A40 dual carriageway. The dual carriageway itself is in cutting close to the site and lined with dense vegetation. To the north-west of Hillingdon Underground Station is woodland, which restricts onwards views from this direction.
- 4.5.7 The land immediately east of the site and the A437 Long Lane is disused and covered with regenerating vegetation, similar to the site itself. This is the site of the former Master Brewer Hotel, which closed in 2007 and was subsequently demolished. It has planning permission for 514 homes across 12 blocks.

Visual Receptor Groups

- 4.5.8 The following visual receptor groups are located within the study area and are likely to have visibility of the proposed development, as shown on the ZTV study on Figure 5. They are considered further in section 6.5:
- Residents, workers and highway users at Hillingdon Circus on Freezeland Way and A437 Long Lane south of the site (0-0.3km, south).
 - Users of Hillingdon Underground Station and A437 Long Lane north of the site (0-0.2km, north and east).
- 4.5.9 There are also a number of receptor groups which are excluded from the detailed assessment, on the basis that visual effects are likely to be Negligible or Neutral, for the reasons indicated below:
- Residents on Hercies Road – Street trees, which are not shown in the ZTV study, limit views of the proposed development along Hercies Road, as shown within Viewpoint 4. This viewpoint also captures the available views from Footpath U60 and Footpath U99 on the Celandine Walk where they meet Hercies Road.
 - Recreational users of Hillingdon Trail and Footpath U62 – Trees (not included in the ZTV study) in gardens and open spaces, including along roadsides limit outward views such that the proposals are unlikely to be seen except perhaps for glimpsed views of the roofline from very limited locations. Viewpoint 6 shows a view from Footpath U62 and shows a lack of visibility to the proposals.
 - Footpaths including the Celandine Walk within the series of meadows near the River Pinn to the west of the site: With the exception of the elevated Footpath U54 represented by Viewpoint 8, which has an open view to the east, the footpaths largely pass through fields separated by dense tree belts and hedgerows (as seen in Viewpoint 5) and have little or no outward visibility in the direction of the site. Views of the proposed development from Viewpoint 8 would be filtered by successive layers of vegetation between the viewpoint and the site and would therefore be likely to result in Negligible effects.
 - Recreational users of Hillingdon Court Park and residents on adjacent roads – Visibility towards the site would be prevented by a series of layers of intervening vegetation and built form.

Key routes

4.5.10 As shown on Figure 1, the following longer distance routes lie within the study area:

Roads and Rail

- A40 Western Avenue (0.1km, north) - The site lies to the south of this key route into Central London. However, due to intervening landform and vegetation, there is no intervisibility between the site and this route. It is therefore not considered further within this report.

4.5.11 Other roads in the study area are more likely to be used for local journeys and are considered within the receptor group areas they lie within.

4.5.12 The Metropolitan Underground Line also passes to the north of the site (the line runs overground at this point), with Hillingdon Underground Station and its associated car park situated immediately north of the site boundary. This route is likely to have intermittent visibility of the proposed development (typically glimpsed from carriage windows), particularly at Hillingdon Underground Station where there are open views across the site from the platform, the pedestrian walkway from A437 Long Lane and the car park.

Recreational Routes

- Celandine Walk (0.7km, west) – This route runs along the River Pinn to the Grand Union Canal, forming a 12-mile route. The ZTV study shows that there would be occasional short sections of the route where visibility (within 1.0km of site) is likely. However, on-site survey shows that visibility is limited due to vegetation and built form, and the few glimpsed views are not likely to lead to greater than negligible effects.
- Hillingdon Trail (1.3km, east) – The route covers 20 miles through Hillingdon, linking Cranford to Harefield. The ZTV study shows a very limited stretch of intervisibility from this route adjacent to the Western Avenue Allotments. However, the on-site-survey confirmed that intervening vegetation obscured this view. This route is therefore not considered further within this report.

4.6 Specific viewpoints

4.6.1 There are no specific identified vantage points within the study area (advertised viewpoints or panoramic viewpoints indicated on Ordnance Survey maps).

4.7 Landscape Designations and Value

Designated areas

4.7.1 Figure 4 illustrates landscape-related designations within the study area. There are no statutory national or local landscape designations falling within this area.

- Approximately 100m north-west of the site and 200m north-east is within the Metropolitan Green Belt. Green Belt land and associated Green Chains are covered by policy within the Local Plan as per paragraph 3.2.5. Whilst they are not landscape designations or indicators of landscape quality, inter alia they aim to protect visual and spatial openness

adjacent to and within urban form. Whilst some of the Green Belt falls within the ZTV study area, on-site survey indicates that visibility with the site is minimal due to intervening vegetation and built form. Effects on the Green Belt would be Negligible and are not considered further.

- An area approximately 700m north of the site is designated as the Ickenham Conservation Area, identifying an area of townscape which is valued for its heritage. The conservation area has no intervisibility with the site as shown on the ZTV study in Figure 4. It is not considered further in this appraisal.
- The area surrounding Hillingdon Court Park is located approximately 1km to the south-west of the site and is designated as an Area of Special Local Character. The relevant policy identifies ASLCs as “*non-designated local heritage assets, that have a character and identity which local residents value ... They are chosen on the basis of their local architectural, townscape or historic merit*”. Whilst this is principally a heritage designation, it is noted as a potential indicator of sensitive heritage value in the surrounding townscape, and which makes a contribution to townscape character. The proposed development would be screened from view from this area by intervening buildings and vegetation; therefore, effects on the ASLC would be Negligible and are not considered further.

5 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

5.1 The Proposal

5.1.1 The proposed development is for commercial use and involves the following changes as shown by the proposed block plans and elevations:

- Clearance of existing regenerating vegetation from the site. The vegetated boundary along Freezeland Way where the land falls from the level of Freezeland Way to that of the site is outside of the red line boundary and will be retained.
- Addition of a mixed-use building (maximum height of 14.5m), comprising a supermarket store on the ground floor and self-storage units on the ground, first and second floors. The building is to be situated in the eastern part of the site with associated paved and landscaped public realm, trolley bay and delivery bay.
- Provision of ramped access road from existing roundabout on Freezeland Way. Makes up the 5.5m level difference between the existing roundabout and the site with an 8% gradient.
- Addition of car and cycle parking associated with the proposed building, comprising 82 car parking spaces and 40 cycle spaces.
- Addition of lighting columns within the car parking area and public realm, as well as wall-mounted and canopy-mounted lights on the building itself.
- Assumed addition of branded signage including lighting on the building and at the access road entrance.

- Landscape planting to the car park, access road and south-western, northern and north-eastern site boundaries.

5.2 Design Approach and Mitigation

- 5.2.1 The design approach is described in full within other documents accompanying the application. This section of the appraisal considers the fit with guidance provided in respect of visual impact and townscape character. Design policy and guidance note the importance of respecting character, particularly of the Conservation Area.
- 5.2.2 The character area description for the Tertiary Centre TT in which the site is based notes that the area offers “*small scale retail and local service provision, typically based in small premises in older buildings*”. The proposals for a supermarket on the site would support this character of “*retail and local service provision*”, although the proposed development would be larger than “*small*” and is a new rather than an old building. The height of the proposed development at 14.5m tall contrasts with the surrounding terraced and semi-detached housing, in correlation with the recorded character of a “*slightly more urban character than surrounding suburbs with terraced buildings, often taller than their context*”.

5.3 Construction

- 5.3.1 The construction of the project would take place over a 12-month period, anticipated to start in January 2026 at the earliest, with the aim of store opening by March 2027. It would involve construction of an entrance ramp and retailing structure from site access to store, comprising elements such as piled foundations, a 3-storey steel frame, blockwork, cladding, provision of utilities, formation of car park, and addition of hard and soft landscape treatments such as paving and tree planting. Task lighting may be required, particularly in the winter months, and this is factored into the appraisal.

6 TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 This section sets out the effects that the proposed development would have on townscape and visual receptors.
- 6.1.2 Effects for the completed development are considered for each townscape and visual receptor. Effects at construction would be secondary in importance to operational effects due to their short-term and temporary nature and thus can be considered lesser than the operational effects recorded below.
- 6.1.3 Where effects on receptors are judged to be lower than moderate, they are described in detail in Appendix 5 and summarised in the relevant sections below.

6.2 Effects on Site Fabric

- 6.2.1 The site would be cleared of regenerating vegetation as part of the proposed development. There would then be the addition of a 14.5m high building comprising a supermarket and self-storage facility, with associated car park and access road. The site would change in

character from a disused and relatively green space to a site defined by built form and related infrastructure.

6.3 Viewpoint Analysis

- 6.3.1 Initial viewpoint analysis has been undertaken from a total of 8 viewpoints, with three of these viewpoints considered suitable for further analysis due to the potential for greater than moderate effects. For details of the viewpoint locations excluded from further analysis, and the reasons why, please refer to Appendix 5.
- 6.3.2 The viewpoint locations are illustrated on Figures 6.1 – 6.8. The Type 1 visualisations (comprising annotated photographs of the existing view) are illustrated with reference to Viewpoints 1 to 8.
- 6.3.3 The full viewpoint analysis is contained within Appendix 5: Viewpoint Analysis. The findings are summarised below in Table 6.6: Viewpoint Analysis Summary. In each case, distances are listed in relation to the nearest point on the site boundary.
- 6.3.4 Please note that Appendix 5: Viewpoint Analysis considers the nature and the scale of changes to character and views at each viewpoint location only. The sensitivity of receptors and wider extent of the effect (beyond the individual viewpoint location) and its duration are considered in the main body of the assessment text below as part of the consideration of the magnitude and significance of effects.

Table 6.1 Viewpoint analysis summary

| Viewpoint No. | Viewpoint | Distance / direction | Scale of Landscape Effect | Scale of Visual Effect |
|---------------|---|----------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | Freezeland Way | 0.01km, north-east | Small | Large |
| 2 | Hillingdon Underground Station | 0.07km, south-west | Small | Medium |
| 3 | A437 Long Lane | 0.21km, north | Small | Small |
| 4 | Hercies Road | 0.41km, north-east | Negligible | Negligible |
| 5 | Footpath U96 | 0.48km, east | Negligible | Negligible |
| 6 | Footpath U62 | 0.66km, west | Negligible | Negligible |
| 7 | Perimeter path at Hillingdon Court Park | 1.14km, north | Negligible | Negligible |

| Viewpoint No. | Viewpoint | Distance / direction | Scale of Landscape Effect | Scale of Visual Effect |
|---------------|--------------|----------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 8 | Footpath U54 | 1.18km, east | Negligible | Negligible |

6.3.5 Each of the viewpoints is a 'sample' of the potential effects, representing a wide range of receptors – including not only those actually at the viewpoint, but also those nearby, at a similar distance and/or direction. From these viewpoints it can be seen that the distribution of effects would be as follows:

6.3.6 Effects on character:

- Medium to Small scale effects would be limited to close proximity to the site, where the proposed development would become an addition to the townscape with characteristic retail and commercial activity. The development would be of similar height to buildings found locally, but of a larger massing. It is to be expected that there will be up to medium scale effects on the character of the site and immediate vicinity. How rapidly effects diminish beyond the site depends on the availability of views, which is largely determined by the orientation of streets and presence of vegetation and built form.
- Effects would reduce to small scale where the building becomes partially screened and assimilated into its local townscape context and the influence of neighbouring buildings of similar scale becomes more of a factor such as views from approximately 200m along the A437 Long Lane to the south of the site.
- Effects would reduce to negligible where views are largely screened such as from Hillingdon Court Park.

6.3.7 Effects on views:

- Extent of Large/Medium scale visual effects, where the proposed development would form a major alteration to key elements, features, qualities and characteristics of the view such that the baseline will be fundamentally changed: This would generally be limited to the site's immediate vicinity on Freezeland Way to the south, the A437 Long Lane to the east and at Hillingdon Underground Station to the north.
- Beyond this area, small scale visual effects would arise within up to 250m, as the proposed building is increasingly screened and seen in a wider townscape context of other similarly tall buildings.
- Beyond approximately 250m from the site boundary, the building is increasingly only partially seen in glimpses above and between other buildings and vegetation. In these locations, visual effects reduce to Negligible such as from Hillingdon Court Park.

6.4 Effects on Townscape Character

6.4.1 Descriptions for each of the appraised character areas/types are briefly summarised below, along with further observations from site-based work.

- 6.4.2 Based on the appraisals of the scale of effects at viewpoints as set out at Table 6.1 above, some of the character areas / types identified in section 4.4 would experience negligible effects and do not require detailed appraisal:
- **Industrial / Business TT (HTCA)** – due to the fact that any effects would be indirect and given the disused commercial baseline of the area in question, any landscape effects on it as a result of the proposed development would be Negligible.
 - **Large Suburban TT (HTCA); G1: Upper Pinn River Corridor LCA (HLCA) and G3: Yeading Brook River Corridor LCA (HLCA)** – due to the presence of intervening vegetation and built form, meaning that any indirect effects within them arising from the proposed development would be Negligible.

Tertiary Centres TT

- 6.4.3 As shown on Figure 3, this character area includes the site and extends to the immediate environs of the site to the north, as well as up to approximately 200m south.
- 6.4.4 Key characteristics are identified within the 2023 assessment as:
- *“Small scale retail and local service provision, typically based in small premises in older buildings.*
 - *Slightly more urban character than surrounding suburbs with terraced buildings, often taller than their context.*
 - *Many tertiary centres have their origins in historic settlements rather than in later planned developments and retain elements of historic fabric.*
 - *Most tertiary centres are located away from major transport nodes.”*
- 6.4.5 As identified within Appendix 4, the susceptibility of this character type is judged to be Medium. This arises from a balance between elements such as the relatively open townscape, the presence of similar height built form, lack of visual relationship between the townscape type and surrounding areas, and a mixed complexity of pattern. As described within Appendix 4, the value of the landscape within this character type is judged to be Community level. The Community value is derived from elements such as the mixed quality of townscape and scenic appeal with some distinctive elements but a lack of tranquillity, recreational features and designations related to townscape, ecology and cultural heritage. Considering susceptibility and value together the sensitivity is judged to be Medium/Low.
- 6.4.6 As described above in section 6.3.6 above and in detail within Appendix 4, Medium scale effects would occur over a very limited area in close proximity to the site. Taking a view of effects in the round, the scale of local townscape effects within approximately 250m (Localised extent) is judged as Small. These effects would be long-term, permanent and irreversible. Effects would be of Slight magnitude, Minor importance and, on balance, Adverse as the result of a large massing of the proposed development in comparison to the surrounding existing townscape.
- 6.4.7 Short-term effects on this character type from the construction stage development would be of Slight magnitude, Minor significance and Adverse.

6.5 Visual Effects

6.5.1 Based on the appraisals of the scale of effects at viewpoints as set out at section 6.3.7 above, some of the visual receptors identified in section 4.5 and described in Appendix 5 would experience negligible effects and do not require detailed assessment:

- Residents on Hercies Road – Street trees, which are not shown in the ZTV study, limit views of the proposed development along Hercies Road, as shown within Viewpoint 4. This viewpoint also captures the available views from Footpath U60 and Footpath U99 on the Celandine Walk where they meet Hercies Road.
- Recreational users of Hillingdon Trail and Footpath U62 – Trees (not included in the ZTV study) in gardens and open spaces, including along roadsides limit outward views such that the proposals are unlikely to be seen except perhaps for glimpsed views of the roofline from very limited locations. Viewpoint 6 shows a view from Footpath U62 and shows a lack of visibility of the proposals.
- Footpaths including the Celandine Walk within the series of meadows near the River Pinn to the west of the site – With the exception of the elevated Footpath U54 represented by Viewpoint 8, which has an open view to the east, the footpaths largely pass through fields separated by dense tree belts and hedgerows (as seen in Viewpoint 5) and have little or no outward visibility in the direction of the site. Views of the proposed development from Viewpoint 8 would be filtered by successive layers of vegetation between the viewpoint and the site and would therefore likely result in Negligible effects.
- Recreational users of Hillingdon Court Park and residents on adjacent roads – Visibility towards the site would be prevented by a series of layers of intervening vegetation and built form.

Visual Receptor Groups

6.5.2 This appraisal focuses on effects on groups of visual receptors, incorporating effects on views from public spaces and streets within neighbourhoods. The appraisal of effects focuses on the visual amenity of public spaces, though views from groups of dwellings will also be noted in the descriptions. Effects on private residential amenity are a separate matter, and as set out at section 2.6 above do not merit detailed assessment in respect of this development.

6.5.3 **Residents, workers and highway users at Hillingdon Circus on Freezeland Way and A437 Long Lane south of the site (0-0.3km, south)** – Viewpoint 1 provides the nearest and most direct and open views of the site from within 100m to the south, with Viewpoint 3 demonstrating the available view from further south along the A437 Long Lane. Receptors from the Hillingdon Circus area include residents, workers, pedestrians and road users. These areas are mostly places of indoor work and transitional spaces, and visual receptors are considered to be of Low susceptibility; however, residents are typically of high susceptibility to changes in their visual environment and this specific receptor group would therefore have High susceptibility. The visual amenity is judged to be of Community value as an area influenced by the busy Hillingdon Circus junction. Visual sensitivity is assessed to be Low for the majority of receptors, but High/Medium for residents. Permanent effects would be up to Large/Medium scale over a localised area. Taking the receptor group as a whole, the scale of effects is judged to be Medium for views in close proximity to the south of the site.

Effects on this receptor group would typically be of Moderate magnitude, Moderate/Minor level of effect and would be Adverse. However, due to their higher sensitivity, the effects on the residents in this receptor group would be of Moderate magnitude, Major/Moderate level of effect and would be Adverse.

6.5.4 Short-term effects on receptors from the construction stage development would be of Slight magnitude, Minor level of effect (Moderate for residents) and Adverse.

6.5.5 **Users of Hillingdon Underground Station and A437 Long Lane north of the site (0-0.2km, north and east)** – Viewpoint 2 provides partial views of the site from receptors on A437 Long Lane. Receptors at Hillingdon Underground Station experience similar views of the proposed development, albeit views would be less screened from the latter. Once again, these areas are mostly places of transitional spaces, and visual receptors are considered to be of Low susceptibility. The visual amenity is judged to be of Community value. Visual sensitivity is assessed to be Low. Taking the receptor group as a whole, the scale of effects is judged to be Medium over a Limited area. Effects on this receptor group would be of Moderate magnitude, Moderate/Minor level of effect and would be Adverse.

6.5.6 Short-term effects on receptors from the construction stage development would be of Slight magnitude, Minor level of effect and Adverse.

Key Routes

6.5.7 **Metropolitan Underground Line** – is located approximately 100m to the north-west of the site, from which users would experience intermittent views of the proposed development viewed above and between existing built form and vegetation. The views would typically be glimpsed through train windows whilst moving, or for short periods whilst stationary at Hillingdon Underground Station, and visual receptors are considered to be of Low susceptibility. Visual amenity is judged to be of Community value and visual sensitivity is assessed to be Low.

6.5.8 ZTV mapping (see Figure 5) indicates intermittent visibility of the proposed development. Where visible, it would be oblique to the direction of travel.

6.5.9 Effects would be Small scale, of Limited extent and Permanent in duration. Effects on this area would be of Slight magnitude, Minor level of effect and would be Adverse.

6.5.10 Short-term effects on receptors from the construction stage development would be of Slight magnitude, Minor level of effect and Adverse.

Specific Viewpoints

6.5.11 As set out in section 4.6.1, there are no specific identified vantage points within the study area (panoramic viewpoints indicated on OS maps).

6.6 Designated Areas

6.6.1 As set out in section 4.7, any effects on designated areas as a result of the proposed development would be Negligible.

6.7 Summary of Landscape and Visual Effects

- 6.7.1 Effects on the receptors assessed are summarised in the table overleaf.
- 6.7.2 The development site is located at the tertiary centre of Hillingdon Circus, adjacent to a large road junction and Hillingdon Underground Station. The height and nature of development would be in keeping with the existing townscape, although the massing would be larger than existing built form locally. The effects upon the Tertiary Centres TT would be Minor at completion.
- 6.7.3 There would be a small area immediately surrounding the site where residents would experience major/moderate visual effects at completion. These would reduce to moderate over time as the landscape proposals establish and soften the impact of the development. For other receptors in the immediate area, the sensitivity to change would be lower and effects would be moderate or less.
- 6.7.4 For users of the Metropolitan Underground Line visual effects would be Minor at completion although these would reduce as landscape proposals establish and add further screening to views.
- 6.7.5 As discussed within Section 7, the proposed development would not result in any notable cumulative impacts in landscape/ townscape and visual terms over and above the effects already reported in the main assessment.
- 6.7.6 In summary, townscape and visual effects would be very contained, and the townscape has the ability to accommodate this proposed development by virtue of the density, disposition and type of existing development in the locality.

Table 7.2 Summary of Effects

Only effects of greater than Negligible magnitude and/or Negligible level of effect are included in the summary table, important effects are underlined.

| Receptor | Description | Sensitivity | Magnitude | Level of Effect | Beneficial /Neutral /Adverse |
|--|--|-------------|-----------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Townscape Character | | | | | |
| Tertiary Centres TT | Effects on the site and area within approximately 100m, once completed | Medium-Low | Slight | Minor | Adverse |
| Visual Receptor Groups | | | | | |
| People living in the area of Freezeland Way and the A437 Long Lane. | Effects arising from close views of the completed development from Freezeland Way and the A437 Long Lane adjacent to the site. | High-Medium | Moderate | <u>Major-Moderate</u> | Adverse |
| People working in or visiting the area of Freezeland Way and the A437 Long Lane to the south of the site. | Effects arising from close views of the completed development from Freezeland Way and the A437 Long Lane adjacent to the site. | Low | Moderate | Moderate-Minor | Adverse |
| People working in or visiting the area of Hillingdon Underground Station and the A437 Long Lane to the north and east of the site. | Effects arising from close views of the completed development from Hillingdon Underground Station and the A437 Long Lane adjacent to the site. | Low | Moderate | Moderate-Minor | Adverse |
| Key Routes | | | | | |
| People travelling on the Metropolitan Underground Line. | Effects arising from close views of the completed development from the Metropolitan Underground Line adjacent to the site. | Low | Slight | Moderate-Minor | Adverse |
| Specific Viewpoints | | | | | |
| None affected | | | | | |

| Receptor | Description | Sensitivity | Magnitude | Level of Effect | Beneficial /Neutral /Adverse |
|----------|-------------|-------------|-----------|-----------------|------------------------------------|
|----------|-------------|-------------|-----------|-----------------|------------------------------------|

Landscape Designations

| | | | | | |
|---------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| None affected | | | | | |
|---------------|--|--|--|--|--|

7 CUMULATIVE ASSESSMENT

- 7.1.1 Desk study work identified a notable consented development within the study area with the potential to result in cumulative townscape and visual effects. This is the consented mixed-use proposals at the Master Brewer site on the eastern side of the A437 Long Lane, opposite the eastern site boundary.

Introduction

- 7.1.2 In line with GLVIA3 (paragraph 7.5), the assessment of cumulative effects should focus on whether there are any likely notable cumulative impacts which are reasonably foreseeable and which are likely to influence the decision making of the Proposed Development. It should not seek to provide an assessment of every potential cumulative effect.
- 7.1.3 In this section, the Proposed Development is referred to as Lidl Hillingdon in order to prevent confusion and differentiate it from other proposed developments that are being considered. Both Lidl Hillingdon and Master Brewer are located on allocated sites.

Cumulative Landscape Effects

- 7.1.4 The townscape type in which the Master Brewer site is situated is the Industrial/Commercial TT from the Hillingdon Townscape Character Assessment. Both the Master Brewer site and the application site are brownfield land and currently occupied by regenerating vegetation and brownfield elements such as disused hardstanding. They are also both experienced in an urban context at present, with similar elements to the proposed/consented developments available in the surrounding townscape. To this end, whilst the combination of the Lidl Hillingdon and Master Brewer developments would result in an increase in urban form in a very localised area, this is in-keeping with the surrounding context to the two sites. It is therefore unlikely that there would be notable cumulative impacts in landscape/ townscape terms over and above the effects already reported in the main assessment within this TVA.

Cumulative Visual Effects

- 7.1.5 As noted above, Lidl Hillingdon is primarily visible in the immediate surrounding context along Freezeland Way and the A437 Long Lane, as well as to users of Hillingdon Underground Station and the Metropolitan Underground Line. Both the Lidl Hillingdon and Master Brewer developments would be likely to be viewed in combination due to their proximity to each other. However, it is not considered that the two developments cumulatively would result in a worsening in views or visual effect, particularly given the urban context of both sites.