

**HEATHROW GARDEN CENTRE, SIPSON,
WEST DRAYTON, HILLINGDON, LONDON**

**LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
FOR
GARDEN CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT**

**On behalf of
LEWDOWN HOLDINGS LTD**

August 2019

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REV: A



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APPOINTMENT

WH Landscape Consultancy Ltd (**WH**Landscape) has been appointed by Lewdown Holdings Ltd to undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for the proposed redevelopment of Heathrow Garden Centre, Sipson, West Drayton, Hillingdon, London.

WHLandscape has an established track record of assessing development proposals. The Practice has considerable experience in the field of landscape and visual assessment and uses tried and tested techniques developed and recognised by the Landscape Institute, Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, and Natural England.

This LVIA has been undertaken by: George Harley BA (Hons) MA CMLI

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This LVIA provides an assessment of the landscape and visual effects associated with the proposed redevelopment of Heathrow Garden Centre, which lies within a plot of approximately 2.73 hectares (ha) on the edge of the village of Sipson. The site is in the London Borough of Hillingdon and is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The findings of the appraisal will be used to determine the suitability of the proposals, as well as to suggest appropriate mitigation measures if required.

1.2 The application will see the redevelopment of the site (See Appendices 1 and 2), including:

- The removal of a dilapidated greenhouse and polytunnel, which are central to the site, as well as the demolition of a redundant outbuilding to the south.
- The construction of a 2500 metres (m)² garden centre building (2.70m to the eaves and 6.50m to the ridge) on the footprints of the dilapidated structures, in addition to the creation of an associated storage area and deliveries/store access.
- The construction of a 240m² community building (2.70m to the eaves and 6.20m to the ridge) south of the existing access.
- The creation of a sales area, defined by 1.80m high wire fencing, to the east and south of the new garden centre building, across an area of existing concrete and scrub.
- The remodelling of the existing tarmacked parking area, reducing the number of spaces from 50 to 33 and allowing an appropriate turning area for delivery vehicles.

1.3 The proposed development also includes the removal of large areas of scrub and unmanaged undergrowth, as well as two trees to the west. However, this is off-set by the provision of extensive tree and hedgerow planting across the site. The existing access off Sipson Road (A408), to the west, is to be retained and enhanced, with appropriate visibility splays being created.

1.4 For this report, the policy context is taken from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019) and the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 1 – Strategic Policies (2012), as well as the saved policies from the Hillingdon Unitary Development Plan (saved as of 2007) (commonly referred to as Local Plan: Part 2 - Saved UDP Policies (2012) in planning decisions). The baseline landscape character has been taken from Natural England National Character Area Profile (NCA): 115. Thames Valley (2012), London's Natural Signatures (2011), and Hillingdon's Landscape Character Assessment (2012). Also of relevance to this project are the emerging Development Management Policies from the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 2 – Development Management Policies (submitted for examination – 2015 version) and the Hillingdon Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) – Planning Obligations (2014).

2. SCOPE AND ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

2.1 The LVIA process is based on the following guidance:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. 3rd ed. (GLVIA 3).
- Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland.

2.2 The LVIA is a tool used to identify and assess the likely effects of change resulting from development, both on the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people's views and visual amenity. Landscape Effects relate to changes to components of the landscape resource as a result of development. Visual Effects relate to the appearance of development, its effect on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by users of the landscape. The study area to be considered includes the site itself and the full extent of the wider landscape with the potential to be influenced by the development.

2.3 BASELINE LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL STUDY

2.3.1 The baseline study reviews the existing landscape and visual resources to determine and describe the conditions against which changes resulting from the development can be measured or predicted and assessed. The process comprises three stages, namely a desk study, field survey and baseline analysis. The baseline study helps identify the landscape and visual receptors which are considered susceptible to change as a result of the development and includes description, classification and evaluation. It forms the basis against which to assess the Magnitude of Effect and subsequently, the Significance of Effect of development on landscape and visual resources.

DESK STUDY RESOURCES

2.3.2 The following resources have been used to inform the field survey and the analysis:

Mapping

- Ordnance Survey maps and vertical aerial photography
- Definitive Rights of Way: Hillingdon Public Rights of Way Definitive Map and Statement
- Geology: Geology of Britain Viewer (British Geological Survey)
- Pedology: Soilscape Map (Soilscape)
- Designations: Magic Interactive Mapping – Hillingdon - UDP Policies (Proposals) Map
- Heritage assets: The National Heritage List for England (Historic England)

Planning Policy

- NPPF
- Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 1 – Strategic Policies
- Hillingdon UDP (Saved Policies)
- Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 2 – Development Management Policies (Not yet adopted)

Character Assessment

- NCA: 115. Thames Valley
- London's Natural Signatures
- Hillingdon's Landscape Character Assessment

Additional Documents

- Hillingdon SPD – Planning Obligations

FIELD SURVEY

2.3.3 The desk study informs the field survey. Of particular relevance are the Ordnance Survey maps, aerial photography and the Landscape Character Assessments. The field survey is then used to gain a full appreciation of the relationship between the site and study area. The field work is supported by mapped viewpoints and photographic records, representative of, and relevant to, the development.

BASELINE ANALYSIS

2.3.4 The findings of the desk study and field survey inform the baseline analysis, which helps in determining the landscape value of the study area through description, classification and evaluation of the landscape and visual resources relevant to the application site and surrounding study area. Determining the value of the landscape as a resource helps in identifying specific landscape and visual receptors that have the potential to be affected by the development.

Landscape value

2.3.5 Landscape value is the relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society; a landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a variety of reasons, however having specific components of value does not mean an area is a valued landscape. Furthermore, while designations can be an indicator of value, the presence of detracting components may mean the value of a designated area locally varies across its geographic extent. Moreover, as identified in GLVIA 3, “the

fact that an area of landscape is not designated either nationally or locally does not mean that it does not have any value”.

2.3.6 Typically, value is determined against a series of predefined factors, to establish an overall landscape value of either Low, Medium, or High, with the importance of any designations also being taken into account. Additionally, the specific value of the site, as a component of the landscape resource, is also considered.

2.3.7 When determining the value of the landscape resource, the following factors, adapted from Box 5.1 of GLVIA 3, are considered relevant to the assessment process:

- **Landscape Quality (condition):** A measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements or features.
- **Scenic Quality:** The term used to describe landscapes which appeal principally to the senses (primarily, but not exclusively, visual).
- **Representativeness:** Whether the landscape contains a particular character and/or elements or features, which are considered particularly important examples thereof.
- **Rarity:** The presence of rare elements or features in the landscape or the presence of a rare Landscape Character Area (LCA) and/or Landscape Character Type (LCT).
- **Conservation Interests:** The presence of features of wildlife, earth science, archaeological or historical, and cultural interest can add to the value of a landscape, as well as having value in their own right.
- **Recreational Value:** Evidence that the landscape is valued for recreational activity, where experience of the landscape is important.
- **Perceptual Aspects:** A landscape may be valued for its perceptual qualities and/or tranquillity.
- **Associations:** Some landscapes are associated with particular people, such as artists or writers, or an event in history that contribute to perceptions of natural beauty of the area.

Landscape Receptors

2.3.8 Landscape receptors will be selected to help ascertain the specific aspects of the landscape resource that have the potential to be affected by the proposed development. Potential receptors include individual elements or features of the study area, both on and off site, as well as the distinct landscape character of the study area as a whole.

Visual Receptors

2.3.9 Visual receptors will initially be identified from where the desk study suggests that the proposed development may be visible, before being verified as part of the field survey. Views will primarily be recorded from Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) and other areas with public access, as well as public roads with full public and permissive access. Residential views will be considered, where appropriate, through the use of representative viewpoints. It should be noted views may be recorded from areas which the desk study suggests have no intervisibility with the site, moreover not all potential visual receptors will be recorded during the field survey (e.g. if there is an obvious lack of intervisibility).

2.4 ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

2.4.1 The landscape assessment addresses changes in the fabric, character and/or key elements or features of the landscape resource. The visual assessment addresses changes in visual amenity, and the implication of those changes on specific visual receptors.

2.4.2 The assessment of effects aims to:

- Estimate the sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors as a function of their value and their susceptibility to change.
- Identify the Magnitude of Effect of the development.
- Provide an assessment of the effects and, subsequently, the Nature of Effect in a logical and well-reasoned fashion.
- Indicate suitable mitigation measures.

2.4.3 The LVIA will consider the likely effects of the proposed development in the context of receptor sensitivity in order to determine the potential effect on the underlying resource, with mitigation measures recommended if required. The overall landscape and visual effects of the development will then be reassessed to determine the effectiveness of the recommended mitigation at both implementation and at maturity.

2.4.4 Designations which may affect the sensitivity of receptors will also be taken into consideration, where appropriate. In terms of listed buildings and other designated heritage assets as receptors, this report will only consider the potential effects on the historic landscape settings of these structures/areas. It should be noted that, although a development may be visible from a listed building or other designated historic asset, this does not automatically mean that there is an effect on its historic landscape setting.

2.4.5 Wherever possible, identified effects are quantified but, by its very nature, the LVIA requires a significant amount of interpretation and professional judgement. To be consistent, the prediction of Magnitude of Effect and the assessment of Significance of Effect have been based on pre-defined criteria.

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

2.4.6 Landscape Sensitivity is a function of the value of a landscape receptor, both as part of the landscape resource and as an individual component, and its ability to accommodate the development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline condition and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies. Typically, susceptibility to change is considered as being either Low, Medium, or High

Table 1a: Landscape Receptor Sensitivity

Level of Sensitivity	Definition of Sensitivity
<i>High</i>	Important landscapes and/or landscape components of high value with a high susceptibility to change.
<i>Medium</i>	Important/moderately valued landscapes and/or landscape components with a medium susceptibility to change.
<i>Low</i>	Moderately valued/relatively unimportant landscapes and/or landscape components with a low susceptibility to change.
<i>Negligible</i>	Degraded landscape tolerant of major change.

2.4.7 Potential Landscape Effects have been assessed using the following thresholds in order to evaluate the Significance of Effect:

Table 1b: Magnitude of Landscape Effect

Level of Magnitude	Definition of Magnitude
<i>Substantial</i>	Total loss or alteration of key characteristics and/or elements or features of the baseline condition (predevelopment).
<i>Moderate</i>	Partial loss or alteration of one or more key characteristics and/or elements or features of the baseline condition, such that the predevelopment condition will be partially changed.
<i>Slight</i>	Minor loss or alteration of one or more characteristics and/or elements or features of the baseline condition, such that the baseline condition will be similar to the predevelopment circumstance.

<i>Negligible</i>	Very minor loss or alteration to one or more key characteristics and/or elements or features of the baseline condition, such that the changes are barely distinguishable.
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VISUAL ASSESSMENT

2.4.8 Visual Sensitivity takes account of the value of routes/areas used by visual receptors including the extent to which attention is focused on the landscape, and the ability of specific views and/or visual amenity to accommodate the development. Certain views that are experienced may have a value attached through planning designations or in relation to heritage assets, or may be indicated on maps or in guidebooks. The following will be used in defining Visual Sensitivity:

Table 2a: Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Level of Sensitivity	Definition of Sensitivity
<i>High</i>	Users of strategic rights of way, cycle paths, etc; important cultural, physical or historic features; views from beauty spots, picnic areas and principal views from residential properties. Places where the attention of the receptor is likely to be focused on the landscape.
<i>Medium</i>	Other public rights of way. Views from principal settlements and secondary views from residential properties. Places where the attention of the receptor may be focused on the landscape.
<i>Low</i>	Receptors engaged in activities other than for the appreciation of the landscape.
<i>Negligible</i>	Views from industrialised areas.

2.4.9 Visual receptors are people, and Visual Effects have been assessed using the following thresholds in order to evaluate the Significance of Effect. The Magnitude of Visual Effect is based on the overall extent of the visibility. Factors such as distance from the development, duration of effect, screening, angle of view, backdrop to the development and extent of other built development are considered in respect of the Magnitude of Visual Effect.

Table 2b: Magnitude of Visual Effect

Level of Magnitude	Definition of Magnitude
<i>Substantial</i>	Fundamental or very obvious change in the character, make-up and balance of the view. The proposals would be prominent or even dominant when considered in terms of the baseline condition. The established visual character would change.

<i>Moderate</i>	Moderate changes in the character, make-up and balance of the view, with the proposals noticeably distinct. This may lead to a change in the established visual character, depending upon the type of development proposed.
<i>Slight</i>	The proposals would be visible as a new feature. Change would be limited and would be unlikely to affect the established visual character as a whole.
<i>Negligible</i>	Virtually imperceptible change in the view. Whilst theoretically visible, the proposals would be faint, not legible or difficult for receptors to discern.

SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT

2.4.10 The Significance of Effect can be expressed as a correlation between the Magnitude of Effect and Landscape or Visual Sensitivity in a single matrix to determine significance as shown in Table 3. However, it must be noted that the matrix is not in itself a substitute for professional judgement, for which allowances must be made. Although mitigation measures are often proposed where the Significance of Effect is Minor or None, it is the Major and Major/Moderate categories which provide the highest level of significance in terms of effect on the landscape and visual resources.

Table 3: Significance of Effect as a Correlation of Sensitivity and Magnitude Applicable to both the Landscape Resource and Visual Amenity

Landscape or Visual Sensitivity	Magnitude of Effect			
	<i>Substantial</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Slight</i>	<i>Negligible</i>
<i>High</i>	Major	Major/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/Minor
<i>Medium</i>	Major/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/Minor	Minor
<i>Low</i>	Moderate	Moderate/Minor	Minor	Minor/None
<i>Negligible</i>	Moderate/Minor	Minor	Minor/None	None

NATURE OF EFFECT

2.4.11 The calculation of a significant effect does not mean that change is Adverse; Nature of Effect is considered independently to the calculation of significance. Change as a result of development may be Positive or Adverse, to varying degrees, or Neutral. Neutral effects are those where change is considered to have neither a Positive nor Adverse effect on the landscape or visual resource being considered. Mitigation can change the Nature of Effect post development, with the aim being to lower the Magnitude of Effect and reduce Adverse effects as far as possible, ideally through mitigation measures that have a Positive effect on landscape and/or visual resources.

3. LANDSCAPE PLANNING CONTEXT

3.1 The following policy has been taken from the planning documents which are pertinent to the development of the site. The following policy extracts and, where applicable, excerpts of explanatory text, are relevant to the application. The policies listed will be used to guide the assessment and the mitigation strategy for the proposed development.

3.2 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

3.2.1 Originally published in March 2012, with subsequent revisions in July 2018 and most recently in June 2019, the NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced. Of particular relevance to this assessment is Section 15. Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment, specifically paragraph 170, which states that "Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by":

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*

and:

- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*

3.2.2 Also of relevance to this project is Section 13. Protecting Green Belt Land, specifically the five purposes of Green Belt listed in paragraph 134.

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

3.2.3 Furthermore, while the NPPF notes that "A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt" paragraph 145 lists the exceptions to this. Of particular relevance to this application is Bullet Point d:

the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;

3.3 LOCAL POLICY

3.3.1 Hillingdon Council is currently preparing its Local Plan, with Part 1 – Strategic Policies having been adopted in November 2012. However, as Part 2 of the Local Plan, which will contain the Development Management Policies for the Borough, is currently under examination and has not yet been adopted, the 2007 saved policies from the Hillingdon UDP remain extant. The emerging Development Management Policies are still a consideration in this report, although as the text is in draft format the wording quoted may be subject to change prior to adoption.

LOCAL PLAN: PART 1 – STRATEGIC POLICIES

POLICY EM2: GREEN BELT, METROPOLITAN OPEN LAND AND GREEN CHAINS

The Council will seek to maintain the current extent, hierarchy and strategic functions of the Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land and Green Chains. Notwithstanding this, Green Chains will be reviewed for designation as Metropolitan Open Land in the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 2- Site Specific Allocations LDD and in accordance with the London Plan policies.

Minor adjustments to Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land will be undertaken in the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 2- Site Specific Allocations LDD.

Any proposals for development in Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land will be assessed against national and London Plan policies, including the very special circumstances test.

Any proposals for development in Green Chains will be firmly resisted unless they maintain the positive contribution of the Green Chain in providing a visual and physical break in the built-up area; conserve and enhance the visual amenity and nature conservation value of the landscape; encourage appropriate public access and recreational facilities where they are compatible with the conservation value of the area, and retain the openness of the Green Chain.

HILLINGDON UDP (SAVED POLICIES)

POLICY OL4 GREEN BELT – REPLACEMENT OR EXTENSION OF BUILDINGS

The Local Planning Authority will only permit the replacement or extension of buildings within the Green Belt if:

- i. The development would not result in any disproportionate change in the bulk and character of the original building;*
- ii. The development would not significantly increase the built up appearance of the site;*
- iii. Having regard to the character of the surrounding area the development would not injure the visual amenities of the green belt by reason of siting, materials, design, traffic or activities generated.*

POLICY OL26 – PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF TREES, WOODLAND AND LANDSCAPE FEATURES

The Local Planning Authority will protect trees and woodlands and encourage the preservation, proper management and in appropriate locations the extension of woodlands. Proposals for development in the more rural areas of the Borough should be accompanied by proposals for landscaping and tree planting wherever practicable, and the retention of existing landscaping features where appropriate.

POLICY BE38 – RETENTION OF TOPOGRAPHICAL AND LANDSCAPE FEATURES, AND PROVISION OF NEW PLANTING AND LANDSCAPING IN DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

Development proposals will be expected to retain and utilise topographical and landscape features of merit and provide new planting and landscaping wherever it is appropriate. Planning applicants for planning consent will be required to provide an accurate tree survey showing the location, height, spread and species of all trees where their proposals would affect any existing trees.

LOCAL PLAN: PART 2 – DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES (NOT YET ADOPTED)

POLICY DMEI 4 – DEVELOPMENT IN THE GREEN BELT OR ON METROPOLITAN OPEN LAND

- A) Inappropriate development in the Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land will not be permitted unless there are very exceptional circumstances.*
- B) Extensions and redevelopment on sites in the Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land will be permitted only where the proposal would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land, and the purposes of including land within it, than the existing development, having regard to:*
 - i) The height and bulk of the existing building on the site;*
 - ii) the proportion of the site that is already developed;*
 - iii) the footprint, distribution and character of the existing buildings on the site;*
 - iv) the relationship of the proposal with any development on the site that is to be retained; and*

- v) the visual amenity and character of the Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land.**

POLICY DMHB 14 – TREES AND LANDSCAPING

- A) All developments will be expected to retain or enhance existing landscaping, trees, biodiversity or other natural features of merit.***
- B) Development proposals will be required to provide a landscape scheme that includes hard and soft landscaping appropriate to the character of the area, which supports and enhances biodiversity and amenity particularly in areas deficient in green infrastructure.***
- C) Where space for ground level planting is limited, such as high rise buildings, the inclusion of living walls and roofs will be expected where feasible.***
- D) Planning applications for proposals that would affect existing trees will be required to provide an accurate tree survey showing the location, height, spread and species of trees. Where the tree survey identifies trees of merit, tree root protection areas and an arboricultural method statement will be required to show how the trees will be protected. Where trees are to be removed, proposals for replanting of new trees on-site must be provided or include contributions to offsite provision.***

4. BASELINE LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL STUDY

4.1 LOCATION AND CONTEXT

4.1.1 The site is located on a parcel of land between Sipson Road and the M4 Heathrow Spur to the east, on the northern edge of the village of Sipson. A Holiday Inn (London – Heathrow) and The Plough public house define the site's northern boundary, while the southern boundary is largely open to the adjacent field, although an element of residential development is present to the south-west. The site is within the Metropolitan Green Belt, between the town of West Drayton to the North and Heathrow Airport to the south, and lies on the western edge of Greater London, approximately 10 kilometres (km) east of Windsor Castle.

4.1.2 At the beginning of the 20th century the site originally formed part of a break in the built form between the residential edge of Sipson and what is now The Plough public house, however this gap was eventually closed following the northern expansion of Sipson and the development of the original Heathrow Garden Centre. The garden centre itself has since fallen into disrepair, with the on-site structures becoming dilapidated and the area as a whole being unmanaged.

4.1.3 Due to the developed nature of a large part of the site, much of the land has already been levelled to accommodate built form, moreover due to the relatively flat topography of the area the change in levels across the site is minimal, being no greater than 1.00m. Vegetation cover within and around the site mainly comprises unmanaged scrub and general undergrowth, as well as several trees around the site boundary. Due to the lack of management, weeds and other pioneer species have started to establish on the existing areas of hardstanding and around the site, with weed cover being notably dense around the access.

4.1.4 The site's location within the Green Belt means that development will be tightly controlled, although there are exceptions to this, as identified in paragraphs 145 and 146 of the NPPF. Green Belts serve as a mechanism to aid urban planning and development, to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. However, while it is noted that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence, its designation is not based on the quality of the landscape or its character and appearance.

4.2 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

4.2.1 The following Landscape Character Assessments have been used to establish the baseline character of study area:

- NCA: 115. Thames Valley
- London's Natural Signatures
- Hillingdon's Landscape Character Assessment

4.2.2 Only the information pertaining to the LCAs and LCTs in which the site is located has been listed in order to help establish its unique landscape character as well as to determine the site's contribution to the landscape character, elements, and features which define the wider landscape. It is important to note that, due to the extent of individual Character Areas and Types, some of the listed information may not be wholly relevant to the site and surrounding landscape.

NATIONAL CHARACTER AREA PROFILES

4.2.3 In 2012, Natural England, as part of its responsibilities in delivering the Natural Environment White Paper, Biodiversity 2020 and the European Landscape Convention, revised the National Character Area Profiles to make environmental evidence and information easily available to a wider audience. The site and entire study area fall within the NCA: 115. Thames Valley.

NCA: 115. THAMES VALLEY – KEY CHARACTERISTICS:

- *Flat and low-lying land, rising to low, river-terraced hills, which include the prominent local outcrop of chalk on which Windsor Castle sits.*
- *The underlying geology is dominated by the London Clay which, over much of the area, is overlain by river-lain sands and gravels.*
- *The numerous hydrological features provide unity to an area which otherwise lacks homogeneity; these features include the River Thames and its tributaries, streams, lakes, canals and open waterbodies (the result of restored gravel workings).*
- *Woodlands characterise the north-western area, with the wooded character extending up to the southern edge of the Chiltern Hills.*
- *Farming is limited. Where it survives, grazed pasture is the major land use within a generally open, flat and featureless landscape. The field pattern is medium-scale and irregular, with smaller fields to the west. Localised areas of species-rich hay meadows provide a splash of colour in summer.*
- *Although densely populated and developed, pockets of woodland, open grassland, parkland, wetlands and intimate meadows provide escape and tranquillity, and include a*

variety of habitats supporting important populations of many species, notably stag beetle, shoveler, gadwall and other invertebrates and wildfowl.

- *Towards London in the east, the natural character of the area is overtaken by urban influences: a dense network of roads (including the M25 corridor), Heathrow Airport, railway lines, golf courses, pylon lines, reservoirs, extensive mineral extraction and numerous flooded gravel pits.*
- *There are small but biologically important areas of lowland heathland – especially on higher sandy ground in the north – and a small area to the south falls within the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) buffer zone.*
- *To the south, the open Thames flood plain dominates, with its associated flat grazing land, becoming characterised by a number of formal historic landscapes on higher ground. Between Hampton and Kew, the River Thames forms the focus of a series of designed landscapes.*
- *The area has an urban character, and there are very few villages of more traditional character, although almost half of the area is greenbelt land and development has been restricted in areas like Crown Estate land and Eton College grounds.*
- *The river is closely associated with numerous historic places and cultural events, such as the signing of Magna Carta at Runnymede. Tourists from all over the world are drawn to the rich heritage of the area, flocking to attractions like Hampton Court Palace and Windsor Castle.*
- *The area is important for recreation, both for residents and visitors. Historic parkland and commons provide access to green space, the Thames Path National Trail runs the length of the NCA, and a variety of activities are enjoyed on the river and other waterbodies.*

LONDON'S NATURAL SIGNATURES

4.2.4 In 2011, Natural England published London's Natural Signatures, a framework to re-establish the relationship between the built and the natural aspects of London. The assessment creates new local identities based on the geology, ecology and landforms of London, with the aim being to help planners and developers reflect the natural landscapes more clearly when regenerating and renewing the capital. The Site and majority of the study area is located with LCA: 10. Hayes Gravels.

LCT: 10. HAYES GRAVELS

Description:

The Hayes Gravels are split in two sections, divided by the Brent Valley (NLA 11). They are gravel terraces to the north of the Thames which run east–west from Hillingdon to Southall and north Hounslow, and then from Ealing and Brentford to Finsbury, sandwiched between the Barnet

Plateau (NLA 3) and Hampstead Ridge (NLA 5) to the north and the Upper Thames Valley (NLA 13) to the south. The alignment of the area follows the broad flightpath of planes coming in to land at Heathrow Airport. The topography is a gradual but fairly constant slope from north to south – there are shallow summits at Hillingdon, to the north of the Serpentine (25m AOD) and in the west at Ealing Common (30m AOD).

London Clay is the dominant bedrock, with deposits of the Boyn Hill Gravel Member near Hillingdon, Langley Silt Member cropping out extensively westwards from Kensington, Lynch Hill Gravel Member through Ealing, Kensington and Westminster, Taplow Gravel Member to the south east (Kensington) and an arm of alluvium extending north through Mayfair. Many areas of the Langley Silts have been worked out around Hammersmith and Hayes for bricks; the quarries were generally not backfilled and houses were built on many of them. Sand and gravel in the west have been extensively worked. These quarries were largely backfilled and were generally not built over.

The soils are principally deep loam, with occasional areas of deep silt and seasonally wet loams and silts which are focused along shallow valleys. This is most evident at the Serpentine Lake in Hyde Park.

The historic centres of settlement (at Ealing, Gunnersbury Park and Shepherd's Bush) developed along the ancient roads from the west leading to the Anglo Saxon trading settlement of Lundenwic. These areas are predominantly Victorian terraces, interspersed by much smaller interwar suburbs. Extensive public open spaces in the east (Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens) are surrounded by Georgian residential buildings in Kensington, Mayfair and Chelsea. In the far west the dominant built form is of recent residential and commercial development, particularly around Hillingdon, Hayes Town and along the A4020.

Few areas of natural landscape remain within this built up area. Overland rail and road infrastructure do not serve as corridors of natural vegetation. However, there are strips of native woodland along the railway embankments in Ealing and in Holland Park, cemeteries and in small patches of Hyde Park/Kensington Gardens. Further west, small areas of semi-natural habitats build up a fragmented ecological network.

Natural Signature:

Hayes Gravels – Small-scale, enclosed landscape of meadows bordered by tall hedgerows, with woodlands, copses and hedgerow trees.

Underlining the Natural Signature of the Hayes Gravels:

Key Influences

- *Oak-ash-hornbeam woodland and copses.*
- *Hazel coppice.*
- *Small pastures enclosed by native hedgerows, with hedgerow trees.*
- *Meadows with tall grasses and herbs.*
- *Small wet meadows and damp woodlands alongside winding streams with narrow floodplains.*

Design Clues

- *Small native woodlands and copses, in combination with wildflower meadows.*
- *Curving wildflower meadows contrasting with areas of mown grass alongside paths and as a focus within open spaces.*
- *Hedgerows and hedgerow trees to divide and define public spaces and routes.*
- *Lines of willow trees along swales and wet ditches.*
- *Community gardens as part of a small-scale landscape pattern.*

HILLINGDON'S LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

4.2.5 In 2012, Land Use Consultants, under the appointment of the Hillingdon Council, produced Hillingdon's Landscape Character Assessment. The purpose of the document is to provide an evidence base for the character, function and quality of the landscape within the Borough, as well as being used to guide and influence its future conservation and management. The site and majority of the study area fall within LCT: K. Open Gravel Terrace, specifically LCA: K2. Harlington Open Gravel Terrace.

LCT: K. OPEN GRAVEL TERRACE

Key Characteristics:

- *A flat, open landscape, typically underlain with Langley Silt Formation and Taplow Gravel Formation. The gravel deposits have frequently been worked and infilled.*
- *Predominately large scale fields of arable farmland, with smaller interspersed fields of paddock along settlement edges. Some large area of gravel and sand extraction, recreation sports grounds and playing fields, plus the historic parkland of Cranford Countryside Park.*
- *Some scattered hydrological features, with a number of ponds occupying former gravel pits. The River Crane flows along the east*
- *Limited tree cover, with the exception of some relatively large area of scrub and trees, such as at Cranford Countryside Park. Hedgerows and scrubby grassed boundaries provide an important linear corridor connecting fragmented habitats throughout the character area.*

- *Modern edge settlement filters into the landscape, along the boundaries, however settlement is limited elsewhere. Heathrow Airport and associated infrastructure feature prominently along the southern boundary.*
- *The M4 runs through the north, and a number of other roads connect settlement, however elsewhere roads are limited.*
- *Few public rights of way, with a number of footpaths associated with Cranford Countryside Park.*
- *Open, long views south across farmland and with buildings and infrastructure of Heathrow Airport noticeable in many vistas.*
- *A simple and uniform character, as a result of limited land cover, land use, and the flat topography.*
- *Retains a largely farmland character, despite being surrounded by settlement and urban development.*
- *Presence of a waste landfill site, area of gravel extraction and several clusters of industrial and commercial buildings, occasionally interrupt the landscape.*

LCA: K2. HARLINGTON OPEN GRAVEL TERRACE

Key Characteristics:

- *A flat, open landscape, underlain with London Clay Formation, and pockets of superficial Taplow Gravel Formation and Lynch Hill Gravel Formation. The gravel deposits have frequently been worked and ground infilled.*
- *A mixed landscape, predominantly arable farmland occupying large scale fields, with a large area of gravel and sand extraction, recreation sports grounds and playing fields, plus Heathpark golf course and a large burial ground.*
- *Limited tree cover, with the exception of relatively large area of scrub and trees in the west. Hedgerows and scrubby grassed boundaries provide an important linear corridor connecting fragmented habitats throughout the character area.*
- *Modern edge settlement surrounds the character area, although there is limited settlement within the character area itself. Heathrow Airport and associated infrastructure feature prominently along the southern boundary.*
- *A number of main roads pass through the character area, with the M4 in the north and west, and several other A and B roads.*
- *Few public footpaths with limited access.*
- *Open, long views south across farmland and with Heathrow notable in many vistas.*
- *A strong horizontal and geometric form, with straight field boundaries and roads, and the flat landform.*

Description:

Location and Boundaries

The character area lies in the south of Hillingdon Borough within the Hayes Gravel Natural Landscape Area (London's Natural Signatures). The boundaries of the character area are largely defined by settlement and roads, with Hayes Town bordering the northern boundary, Harlington located to the east, and the A408 and edge of Sipson defining the west. Commercial infrastructure associated with Heathrow airport delineates the southern extent of the character area.

Landscape Character

A flat and open landscape, with a mix of land uses. Large fields of arable cultivation predominate, interspersed with amenity grass playing fields, Heathpark golf course, a large cemetery and industrial sand and gravel works. Limited tree cover emphasises the openness of the character area, with long views across the landscape, particularly south, towards Heathrow Airport, which features prominently in many views. A network of hedgerows provides some visual unity and wildlife corridors with this landscape, and generate a strong geometric form.

Evaluation:

Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

- *Openness and long views, particularly to the south, could be interrupted by further development.*
- *Network of hedgerows which provide wildlife corridors and visual continuity.*
- *Areas of stillness and limited overt human impact, away from the busy M4 and other development, such as Heathrow Airport.*
- *Areas of scrub, woodland and Sites of Borough Grade I and II provide pockets of biodiversity*
- *Open agricultural landscape which has been retained within largely settled and urban surroundings.*

4.3 THE SITE AND STUDY AREA

4.3.1 The study area is broadly defined by three distinct areas; Heathrow Airport, the Metropolitan Green Belt, and the residential edge of West Drayton. Three villages, Harmondsworth, Sipson and Harlington break-up the Green Belt, and are remnants of the more rural landscape which dominated the area prior to the establishment of the airport and the post-war expansion of London. The study area is well connected by several major transport corridors including the M4 and a series of A roads, as well as a series of more historic minor roads and lanes.

4.3.2 Heathrow defines the southern boundary of the study area, with the edge of the airport roughly delineated by the A4 (Bath Road). Being a major international airport, it has had a distinct influence on the landscape of the study area, with there being a notable increase in housing and general infrastructure in the local area since it was opened as a civil airport in 1946. Furthermore, its proposed expansion would see a large area of the Green Belt to the west of Sipson developed to facilitate a third runway. This development would not only change the character of the area but would also result in the loss of much of the Village of Harmondsworth.

4.3.3 The northern boundary of the study area is defined by the residential edge of West Drayton, roughly delineated by the M4. Much of the expansion of the town was as a result of the opening of Heathrow Airport, with the later development of the M4 helping develop the area as a transport hub and commuter town. Within the study area the edge of the settlement is characterised by a series of housing estates, interspersed with areas of Green Belt land, used as parkland and recreational ground, as well as a golf course and a large cemetery.

4.3.4 The Metropolitan Green Belt separates Heathrow Airport and West Drayton, creating a break between these two large areas of urban built form. While the Green Belt itself is broken up by three villages, it still presents as a comparatively open landscape; albeit it is somewhat degraded by large areas being quarried for gravel and sand extraction as well as the land between Harmondsworth and Sipson being used as a landfill site. The remaining fields are used for arable crop production and grassland (both amenity and grazing pasture), which in conjunction with the surrounding development give the area a quasi-rural character. Hedgerow cover defines the majority of field boundaries, although there are notable areas of fragmentation present. Tree cover is less regular, typically being found in clumps and belts around the edge of settlements and along transport corridors.

4.3.5 As previously mentioned, the three villages within the Green Belt were present prior to the more recent development which now characterises the landscape. While historically settlements within the study area were more dispersed, more modern development has seen them expand and begin to encroach on one another. Both Sipson and Harlington were historically linear settlements, a characteristic they largely retain, although they now essentially link Heathrow and West Drayton with built form. Harmondsworth has always been a more nucleated settlement but like the other two villages has seen considerable expansion since the mid-20th century. However, much of this settlement will be lost if the development of the third runway and related infrastructure goes ahead. While Harmondsworth and Harlington both have associated Conservation Areas, Sipson does not.

4.3.6 Topographically the area is relatively flat with there being no distinct natural landform features; there is a very slight southerly aspect although this cannot be readily discerned. The study area and much of the surrounding landscape is underlain by London Clay Formation (clay, silt and sand), with soils generally being freely draining, slightly acid and loamy, with a low fertility. There are several large superficial deposits present within the study area, predominantly Langley Silt Member and Taplow Gravel Member, with the latter being heavily worked by Harleyford Aggregates at the Sipson Quarry, east of the site.

4.3.7 Pedestrian access through the study area is extremely limited. While there are open areas of parkland as well as playing fields and recreational grounds, PRowS and other routes with public access are not a common feature. Moreover, there is no clear connection between the PRowS that are present and as such it cannot be said that they form a Strategic Right of Way.

4.4 BASELINE ANALYSIS

4.4.1 The findings of the desk study and field survey have been used to determine the landscape value of the study area, and subsequently identify specific landscape and visual receptors that have the potential to be affected by the development. The effect of the development on these receptors will be calculated, leading to an overall determination of Significance of Effect on both the landscape resource and the visual amenity of the study area.

4.4.2 It should be noted that, while specific receptors have been identified for consideration, this does not necessarily mean that they will be significantly and/or adversely affected by the proposals. Moreover, where there are Significant and/or Adverse effects on specific receptors, this does not mean that there will be Significant Adverse effects on the study area as a whole.

LANDSCAPE VALUE

4.4.3 The key factors in determining the landscape value of the study area are listed below:

- **Landscape Quality (condition):** The landscape of the study area is continually developing and the built environment expanding, changing the perception of the area. Most notably if approved the Heathrow expansion will represent a distinct change in the make-up of the landscape, not only due to its size but also as it will see the loss of a large area of Green Belt. Overall the Quality of the landscape is somewhat fragmented, broken up by major transport corridors, as well as quarries and landfill sites. While the site itself is well contained by dense

vegetation, the general lack of management means that its landscape structure is fairly poor.

Value rating: *Low*.

- **Scenic Quality:** The prevailing urban appearance of the landscape, coupled with the large areas of transport infrastructure mean that scenic quality is limited. The Green Belt presents as a less developed area, however it is enclosed by the detracting context of the surrounding built form, as well as being broken up by detracting landuses (quarrying and landfill). In the case of the site itself, it is seen as a derelict and unmanaged area of land within the Green Belt and has no scenic value. **Value rating:** *Low*.
- **Representativeness:** The study area is generally representative of the landscape described in Hillingdon's Landscape Character Assessment. However, areas such as the site itself, and the adjacent Holiday Inn, are somewhat discordant features within the Open Gravel Terrace LCT, being more akin to transitional areas between the townscape and the surrounding fields, rather than falling into one distinct character area. Furthermore, if the third runway at Heathrow is developed, many of the characteristics which define the land between Heathrow and West Drayton will be lost, with the operation of the airport resulting in changes to character beyond the runway. This will also have a notable effect in respect of the essential characteristics of the Green Belt, with the section of Green Belt which bisects the study area, losing a large part of its openness and permanence. **Value rating:** *Medium – Low*.
- **Rarity:** While the identified characteristics relevant to the study area represent important elements and features of the landscape resource, they are neither particularly rare nor common in respect of the wider scope of the relevant character assessments. However, in the case of the Green Belt, while it is not an uncommon designation, the associated characteristics (mainly openness from major development) are somewhat rare in respect of the largely urban landscape. Moreover, if the third runway at Heathrow is built these characteristics will become more unusual. **Value rating:** *Medium*.
- **Conservation Interests:** While there are numerous listed buildings within the study area, including several Grade II* and Grade I listed heritage assets, as well as Conservation Areas at Harmondsworth and Harington, overall conservation interests within the study area are limited **Value rating:** *Medium – Low*.
- **Recreational Value:** The landscape of the study area has limited recreational value. While the Green Belt represents an area of relatively open land in an otherwise urban environment, public access is extremely limited meaning that any value attached to the area is based more on the perceptual aspects of the Green Belt rather than its use for recreational activity. **Value rating:** *Low*.

- **Perceptual Aspects:** The perception of the study area is predominantly that of an urban environment, however this means that the value attached to the Green Belt that bisects it is greater. While the Green Belt has limited value in respect of its landscape and scenic qualities and is not particularly tranquil due to the presence of the M4 and the Airport, it still represents a distinct break between West Drayton and Heathrow, as well as being comparatively open in terms of built form that is present. The perceived value of Green Belt is also likely to increase if the third runway at Heathrow is developed as this will see an overall reduction in the amount of Green Belt in the local area. **Value rating:** *High – Medium*.
- **Associations:** While Heathrow airport and its proposed expansion into the Green Belt is a place/event known nationally, this does not contribute to perceptions of natural beauty of the area. The site and the surrounding study area contain no known associations to any particular people or events that may have provided the landscape within the study area with cultural prominence. **Value rating:** *Low*.

4.4.4 Overall the value of the landscape is *Medium – Low*, which means that the site is not a ‘valued landscape’ under Section 15, Paragraph 170, Bullet Point 1, of the NPPF.

LANDSCAPE RECEPTORS

4.4.5 The following landscape receptors have been identified as being aspects of the landscape resource that have the potential to be affected by the proposals:

- Established landscape character, elements, and features (which define the LCAs and LCTs in which the site is located).
- The essential characteristics of Green Belt (openness and permanence).
- The importance of the site as a component of the Green Belt.
- Existing on-site and boundary vegetation and its importance in respect of the site itself, as well as part of the wider study area.
- The historic environment and the site’s relationship with notable heritage assets.

VISUAL RECEPTORS

4.4.6 The following visual receptors locations have been identified as having potential intervisibility with the proposals:

- Sipson Road
- The M4 Heathrow Spur
- The Plough public house

- Holiday Inn (London – Heathrow)
- The northern residential edge of Sipson
- Sipson Lane
- Holloway Lane

5. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT

5.1 LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

5.1.1 The Landscape Value of the study area as a whole is *Medium – Low*, as while the Green Belt has value in and of itself, there are a series of elements and/or features which significantly detract from the overall landscape and scenic quality of the area, most notably Heathrow airport and the major transport network which dominates the landscape. The overall Susceptibility to Change of the application site as a component of the landscape is *Low*, in respect of the development proposed. While it falls within the Green Belt, it is already a developed area of land that is an established feature in the area. Moreover, the dilapidated and unmanaged appearance of the site is a detracting feature within the local landscape, something that will be addressed through the redevelopment. As such, the Overall Landscape Sensitivity of the development area within the surrounding landscape is *Low*.

5.1.2 The site itself does not represent a specific feature or element defined as a key characteristic of the study area, as listed in the relevant landscape character assessments. It is recorded as being within LCA: K2. Harlington Open Gravel Terrace, however, it in fact forms more of a transition area between this LCA and the adjacent townscape of Sipson, sharing characteristics of both. The proposed development will not be an isolated area of development to the north of Sipson as the presence of a Holiday Inn (London – Heathrow) and The Plough public house to the north of the site already represents the extent of development beyond the village. Furthermore, no characteristic features and elements of the landscape will require removal to facilitate the site's redevelopment.

5.1.3 A garden centre is an established feature to the north of Sipson, and while currently dilapidated and unused, its redevelopment, even though larger in size, would not result in a form of development uncharacteristic of the area. It is for similar reasons that the effect on the character of the Green Belt will also be limited. While there will be an increase in built form at the site, this will not be so significant as to affect the permanence and/or openness of the green belt more than the existing, dilapidated Garden Centre. Moreover, as the proposed development will be of the same use, and largely in keeping with the scale and massing of the existing on-site built form, the application meets the criteria of paragraph 145, bullet point d, of the NPPF which lists the forms of development that are not considered inappropriate in the Green Belt.

5.1.4 In respect of the community building, while it will represent a form of development that it currently not present at the site, its proposed location adjacent to Sipson Road, in line with the existing properties to the south, means that it relates well to the residential edge of Sipson and will not result

in an isolated area of built form. Furthermore, the community building is of a similar size to an existing redundant outbuilding, separate from the main garden centre, that is to be removed as part of the application. As such, while the location of built form has changed, the construction of the community building will not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing outbuilding, meeting the criteria of paragraph 145, bullet point g, of the NPPF.

5.1.5 The proposals will see the loss of two trees to allow for the remodelling of the parking area and the construction of the community building, in addition to the removal of large areas of scrub and unmanaged undergrowth. However, this vegetation has limited value outside of the site, not representing a notable feature either within the local area or the wider landscape. Furthermore, all of the retained vegetation will be repaired and managed, as it is acknowledged that the site's existing landscape structure will play a key role in creating a setting for the development. Moreover, the outline landscape proposals, which form part of the scheme, include extensive tree and hedgerow planting across the site, which will off-set the loss of any existing planning.

5.1.6 The site itself is an area of land with no specific historic or architectural interest. Any value the land previously had, in respect of the historic landscape, was derived from it historically forming part of a break in the built form between the residential edge of Sipson and what is now The Plough public house. However, the subsequent expansion of Sipson and development of Heathrow Garden Centre itself, as well as the construction of the Holiday Inn, has definitively changed the area's historic landscape context with any associations with the historic landscape having been lost. The proposed development is not considered to affect the historic landscape settings of any heritage assets within the study area due to distance and a general lack of intervisibility.

5.1.7 The development proposals will not conflict with the relevant key issues, strategies, objectives and policies identified across the relevant Character Assessments, additionally, the proposals are not considered inappropriate in respect of the five purposes of Green Belt.

5.1.8 In terms of the Overall Magnitude of Landscape Effect resulting from the proposals, any change has to be considered in terms of the key elements and features that will definitely be affected and those that will potentially be affected. The importance of these elements and features as part of the wider landscape is also a consideration. The proposals will see the redevelopment of the site with the landuse remaining unchanged. While there will be a slight increase in on-site development, as well as the removal of some on-site vegetation, this will not result in the significant loss or alteration of any

key elements, features or characteristics of the baseline condition. Moreover, the redevelopment of the site will not affect the key characteristics of Green Belt land, nor will it conflict with the five purposes of Green Belt, with the perceived openness and permanence of the Green Belt remaining unchanged. As such, the Overall Magnitude of Landscape Effect is *Slight*. The development proposals have an Overall Significance of Landscape Effect of *Minor*, which is **not** significant when considered under the LVIA methodology used in the assessment.

5.1.8 The development will not be unduly prominent nor detract from the surrounding landscape, with the proposed built form being of the same landuse as that which is already established on the site. Moreover, the proposals will result in the improvement of an area of dilapidated and unmanaged land within the Green Belt, with there also being secondary benefits in respect of habitat creation through the proposed extensive new planting. As such, the Overall Nature of Landscape Effect of the proposed development, with mitigation, is *Positive*.

5.2 VISUAL ASSESSMENT

5.2.1 Recorded viewpoints can be used to predict possible effects from PROWs, roads, publicly accessible areas and residential properties within the study area. Viewpoints have been determined from where the desk study suggested that the development areas may be visible, as well as observations during the field survey.

5.2.2 Additionally, photomontages, recorded and prepared by SDMVisuals, have also been considered as part of the visual assessment. While not all recorded from publicly accessible areas, the photomontages help illustrate the predicted appearance of a development, and thus can be used to help determine the effect of the development on the openness of the Green Belt.

5.2.3 For the purpose of this assessment, close views are between 0m – 500m from the main development area, medium views are between 500m – 1500m, and long views from further than 1500m. Views are representative and not totally exclusive. (See Appendices 2 and 3 for enlarged copies of the selected viewpoints and photomontage images). The recorded viewpoints and photomontages are considered appropriate for the scale of the development and the prevailing topography and land cover.

VIEWPOINT ANALYSIS

5.2.4 All the viewpoint photographs were taken using a digital equivalent of a 50mm focal length traditional 35mm SLR lens to represent most accurately the views as seen by the human eye. Photographs were recorded from 1.80m in height.

5.2.5 The viewpoints were visited in December 2018 when leaf cover was at a minimum. The Seasonal differences (seasonality), in respect of potential effects arising from the varying degree of screening/filtering of views by vegetation that will apply in summer and winter, have been considered in the assessment of all recorded Viewpoints; as per the recommendation of GLVIA3. It is important to note that the recording of Viewpoints during different seasons is not a prerequisite of the consideration of seasonality, as GLVIA3 states:

The timing of the assessment work and the project programme will also influence the practicality of covering more than one season.

Viewpoint 1: Close distance, partial glimpsed view east through site access; taken from walkway along Sipson Road. Note: The existing vegetation across the site access comprises dense pernicious weeds that will be removed as part of the development.

Approximate distance from site: Adjacent

OS map elevation: Approx. 28.70m AOD (Survey data)



ASSESSMENT:

The new garden centre building will be visible where the existing dilapidated structures are currently seen, while the community building will be partially visible to the right of the existing access. There will be slight changes to the make-up and balance of the view as a result of the proposed development, however change would be unlikely to affect the established visual character as a whole, as the baseline condition is one where development is already seen.

While new planting will not immediately provide the same level of containment as the existing vegetation, with plants having grown over boundary fencing, making them appear taller, this will be offset by the benefits to visual amenity as

	a result of the removal the pernicious weeds. Once established the proposed hedging either side of the site access will largely replicate the level of containment provided existing vegetation, while new tree planting will further break up views of the proposed buildings, as well as softening the parking area. Seasonal views of the development will reduce as the proposed planting establishes and matures, eventually providing a high level of containment even during times of reduced leaf cover.
SIGNIFICANCE CALCULATION:	Receptor Sensitivity: <i>Low</i> Magnitude of Effect: <i>Slight</i> Significance of Effect: <i>Minor</i>
NATURE OF EFFECT:	The removal of visible detracting features such as the dilapidated buildings and the general improvement of what is currently seen as an unmanaged area of land, mean that the Nature of Effect of the proposed development is <i>Positive</i> .

Viewpoint 2: Close distance, partial glimpsed view north-east, taken from walkway along Sipson Road on the residential edge of Sipson.

Approximate distance from site: 25m

OS map elevation: Approx. 29.00m AOD (Survey data)

	
ASSESSMENT:	While there will be views of the proposed community building where on-site development is not currently seen, it will appear subservient to the Holiday Inn which dominates the view. Furthermore, intervening off-site vegetation on the residential edge of Sipson, coupled with a backdrop of tree over helps contain the building within the site, with the trees also creating a physical and visual break between the new development at the Holiday Inn. The remainder of the proposed development will be obscured by existing vegetation and development between the viewpoint and the site. The site access is visible, however visual change will primarily be as a result of the removal of the existing roadside vegetation to facilitate appropriate visibility splays, as well as the planting of new hedging and trees.

	Much like in the case of views through the site access, new planting will not immediately provide the same level of containment as the existing vegetation, mainly due to density, however the off-site vegetation will still break up views. with new tree planting creating immediate structure, while also filtering views of the community building. Once established the proposed planting will see a visual enhancement to residential edge of Sipson, with the removal the pernicious weeds having benefits in respect of visual amenity when approaching and exiting the village. Seasonal views of the development will reduce as the proposed planting establishes and matures, eventually providing a high level of containment even during times of reduced leaf cover.
SIGNIFICANCE CALCULATION:	Receptor Sensitivity: <i>Medium – Low</i> Magnitude of Effect: <i>Slight – Negligible</i> Significance of Effect: <i>Minor</i>
NATURE OF EFFECT:	Despite the introduction of a new element of built form, views will remain largely unchanged, the Nature of Effect of the proposed development is <i>Neutral</i>.

Viewpoint 3: Close distance, partial filtered view south-east; taken from walkway along Sipson Road.

Approximate distance from site: Adjacent

OS map elevation: Approx. 28.60m AOD (Survey data)

	
ASSESSMENT:	The parking area is obscured by existing unmanaged, scrub and pernicious weeds, which is to be replaced with hedging and trees as part of the development proposals. The new garden centre building will be visible where the existing dilapidated structures are currently seen, with potential glimpsed views of the proposed community building. Overall there will only be limited changes to the make-up and balance of the view as the baseline condition is one where on-site development is already visible. While new planting will not immediately be of the same density as the existing roadside vegetation, it will largely be of a similar height, and when in leaf will have a similar effect in respect of restricting views. Seasonal views of the development

	will reduce as the proposed planting establishes and matures, eventually providing a high level of containment even during times of reduced leaf cover. Removal of the weeds will have benefits in respect of visual amenity, improving the experience for users of the roadside path, while the addition of trees along the boundary will create structure around the site and will further break up view of the proposed buildings.
SIGNIFICANCE CALCULATION:	Receptor Sensitivity: <i>Low</i> Magnitude of Effect: <i>Slight</i> Significance of Effect: <i>Minor</i>
NATURE OF EFFECT:	The removal of visible detracting features such as the dilapidated buildings and the general improvement of what is currently seen as an unmanaged area of land, mean that the Nature of Effect of the proposed development is <i>Positive</i> .

Viewpoint 4: Close distance, representative view south-east; taken from within the site on the boundary with The Plough public house. Views from the parking area of the public house are similar to those recorded albeit filtered by existing boundary tree and shrub cover.

Approximate distance from site: Within

OS map elevation: Approx. 28.50m AOD (Survey data)



ASSESSMENT:	The new garden centre building will be visible where the existing dilapidated structures are currently seen, while the community building will be seen against
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	a backdrop of trees on the residential edge of Sipson. The change in the layout of built form will be noticeable, however, it will have no effect on the established visual character of the site. The remodelling of the parking area will be apparent but will not represent a detrimental change, furthermore, the proposed planting will be seen to break up the hardstanding and restrict views across the entire parking area. Seasonality will further reduce intervisibility with the site when the existing vegetation is in full leaf, Furthermore, the proposed boundary hedge will further break up views, and will effectively obscure the new development once it is established.
SIGNIFICANCE CALCULATION:	Receptor Sensitivity: <i>Low</i> Magnitude of Effect: <i>Slight</i> Significance of Effect: <i>Minor</i>
NATURE OF EFFECT:	The removal of visible detracting features such as the dilapidated buildings and the general improvement of what is currently seen as an unmanaged area of land, mean that the Nature of Effect of the proposed development is <i>Positive</i> .

Viewpoint 5: Close distance, partial-filtered view south; taken from the edge of a car park for the adjacent Holiday Inn.

Approximate distance from site: 70m

OS map elevation: Between 25-30m AOD

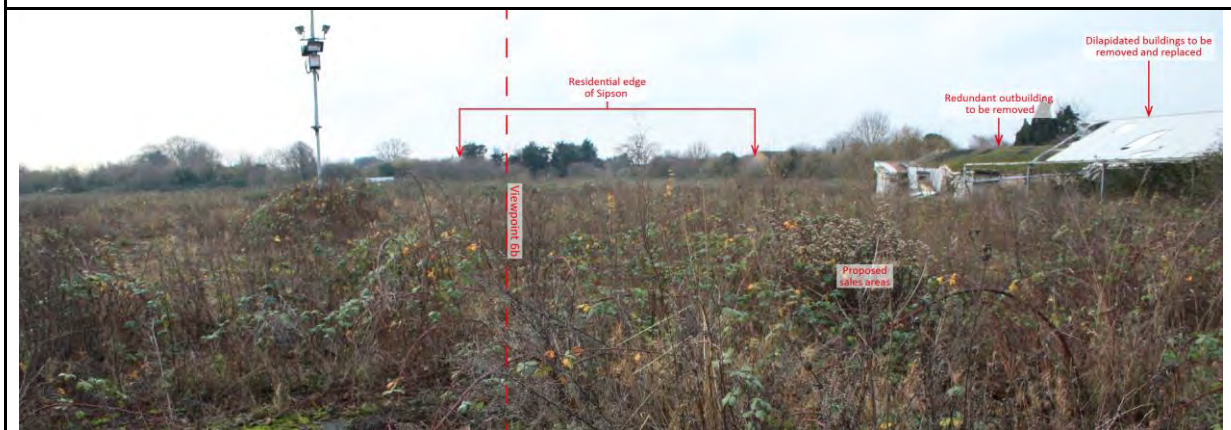
	
ASSESSMENT:	The parking area is obscured by existing intervening vegetation, both around the site and along the boundary of the Holiday Inn land, however there will potentially be glimpsed views of the community building. The new garden centre building and sales area will be visible where the existing dilapidated structures are currently seen. While there will be a slight expansion of on-site built form, overall there will only be limited changes to the make-up and balance of the view. New tree and hedge planting along the site's northern boundary will further reduce intervisibility with the site, while being in keeping with the established visual character. Seasonality will see a further reduction in intervisibility with the site when vegetation, both existing and proposed, is in full leaf.

SIGNIFICANCE CALCULATION:	Receptor Sensitivity: <i>Low</i> Magnitude of Effect: <i>Slight</i> Significance of Effect: <i>Minor</i>
NATURE OF EFFECT:	The removal of visible detracting features such as the dilapidated buildings and the general improvement of what is currently seen as an unmanaged area of land, mean that the Nature of Effect of the proposed development is <i>Positive</i> .

Viewpoint 6: Close distance, representative view south-west; taken from within the site on the boundary with the adjacent Holiday Inn. There will be elevated views from the upper windows of the Holiday Inn, over the boundary vegetation.

Approximate distance from site: Within

OS map elevation: Approx. 28.80m AOD (Survey data)



ASSESSMENT:	Due to elevated nature of the receptors, the development will be visible over the boundary vegetation, with there being open views of the new buildings, sales area and car park. While the changes will be noticeably distinct, there will only be slight perceived changes to the character, make-up and balance of views as the use and layout of the site will remain largely the same. The community building will be visible as a new feature however this will be seen in the context of the removal of the existing outbuilding which is of a similar size. The increase in size of the garden centre building will be apparent, however it will not become a prominent feature.
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	The site will be seen in the context of the M4 Spur and Heathrow Airport, features which dominate views. Due to the elevated nature of receptors, seasonality will have little effect on the perception of the development, although it will offer some level of containment along the site's northern boundary.
SIGNIFICANCE CALCULATION:	Receptor Sensitivity: <i>Medium – Low</i> Magnitude of Effect: <i>Moderate – Slight</i> Significance of Effect: <i>Moderate/Minor</i>
NATURE OF EFFECT:	While there will be a visible increase in development within the site, the improvement of the on-site built form and general management of the area will mean that the Nature of Effect of the proposed development is slightly <i>Positive</i> .

Viewpoint 7: Close distance, representative view north-west; taken from land under the applicant's control, adjacent to the M4 Spur. Large breaks in roadside vegetation mean that the site is visible from several points along the motorway, however views will be glimpsed and for a short duration due to the speed of traffic.

Approximate distance from site: 35m

OS map elevation: Approx. 28.30m AOD (Survey data)



ASSESSMENT:	The community building being will be visible as a new feature, set back on the edge of the site, however this will be seen in the context of the removal of the existing outbuilding which is of a similar size. Removal of the outbuilding will open up views towards the parking area, however new tree planting will help break up views. The sales area and garden centre building itself will be visible where the existing dilapidated structures are currently seen. While there will be a slight expansion to the east, there will only be limited changes to the make-up and balance of the view. Moreover, The Holiday Inn will continue to dominate the view post development. New tree planting around the sales area will create structure around the garden centre and will help filter views of the building as they mature. Seasonality will see a slight reduction in intervisibility with the site when the roadside vegetation is in full leaf, however the large gaps will remain.
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SIGNIFICANCE CALCULATION:	Receptor Sensitivity: <i>Low</i> Magnitude of Effect: <i>Slight</i> Significance of Effect: <i>Minor</i>
NATURE OF EFFECT:	The removal of visible detracting features such as the dilapidated buildings and the general improvement of what is currently seen as an unmanaged area of land, mean that the Nature of Effect of the proposed development is <i>Positive</i> .

Viewpoint 8: Close distance, partial view north-west; taken from walkway along Sipson Lane where it crosses the M4 Spur.

Approximate distance from site: 260m

OS map elevation: Approx. 40m AOD (From bridge over M4)



ASSESSMENT:	The community building will be obscured by dense vegetation along the motorway, however the sales area and garden centre building itself will be visible where the existing dilapidated structures are currently seen. The removal of the outbuilding will potentially open up glimpsed views of the car parking area, however new tree planting will help break up views. While there will be a slight expansion to the east, there will only be limited changes to the make-up and balance of the view. Moreover, The Holiday Inn will continue to dominate the view post development. New tree planting around the sales area will create structure around the garden centre and will help filter views of the building as they mature. Seasonality will see a slight reduction in intervisibility with the site when the roadside vegetation is in full leaf, however the large gap through which the site is visible will remain.
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SIGNIFICANCE CALCULATION:	Receptor Sensitivity: <i>Low</i> Magnitude of Effect: <i>Slight</i> Significance of Effect: <i>Minor</i>
NATURE OF EFFECT:	The removal of visible detracting features such as the dilapidated buildings and the general improvement of what is currently seen as an unmanaged area of land, mean that the Nature of Effect of the proposed development is <i>Positive</i> .

Viewpoint 9: Close distance, obscured view east; taken from walkway along Holloway Lane, adjacent to entrance to Harmondsworth Landfill.

Approximate distance from site: 400m

OS map elevation: Between 25-30m AOD



ASSESSMENT:	Tree cover along Holloway Lane, as well as intervening vegetation in the wider landscape mean that views of the site are obscured throughout the year.
SIGNIFICANCE CALCULATION:	Receptor Sensitivity: <i>Low</i> Magnitude of Effect: <i>None</i> Significance of Effect: <i>None</i>
NATURE OF EFFECT:	As the site is not visible, the Nature of Effect of the proposed development is <i>Neutral</i> .

Overall Significance of Visual Effect

5.2.6 The Overall Visual Sensitivity of the study area is considered *Low*, taking account of the area's limited public access but also the generally degraded appearance of the Green Belt and the large areas of built form which dominate the surrounding landscape and detract from its visual amenity. The site is extremely well contained within the landscape, with the proposed development having a restricted visual envelope. All potential views are from within 500m and consist of partial glimpses of the development area through gaps in the landscape structure around the site. From the remainder of the landscape, publicly accessible views are obscured by intervening vegetation and existing development

5.2.7 There are no sustained views of the site for receptors passing through the landscape, in large part due to the glimpsed nature of potential views but also due to the transient nature of the majority of potential receptors. While the development will be visible as a new feature within the landscape, the make-up and balance of the views will be largely unchanged due to the site's established built form context. Overall, change would be limited and highly unlikely to affect the established visual character as a whole.

5.2.8 The overall effect on the visual amenity of the study area will be limited, with the development being very well contained within the landscape on land that has previously been developed. The development will not be seen from any high sensitivity locations, nor will it be visible from anywhere where the existing onsite built form is not already visible. The indicative landscaping scheme helps further contain the site within the landscape, without affecting the visual character. As such the Overall Magnitude of Visual Change is *Slight*, resulting in the Overall Significance of Visual Effect being *Minor*, which is **not** significant when considered under the LVIA methodology used in the assessment.

5.2.9 As is the case of all publicly accessible areas where there are views of the development area, the proposals will see the removal of visible detracting features such as the dilapidated buildings and the general improvement of what is currently seen as an unmanaged area of land on the edge of Sipson. As such the Overall Nature of Visual Effect of the proposed development is *Positive*.

PHOTOMONTAGE ANALYSIS

5.2.10 The photomontages were created by SDMVisuals using Archicad (3d model), Lumion (camera match, populating and rendering) and Photoshop (post-production). All the photomontages comprise images stitched together to form a panorama, with the original photographs being recorded using a focal length of 24mm; the equivalent focal length of the panoramas is unknown. Photographs were recorded at the varying heights (View 1: 1.54m, View 2: 2.41m, View 3: 2.41m).

5.2.11 Due to the manner in which the photographs have been taken and presented they do not meet the criteria for verified views and instead are considered to be artistic impressions. However, they are deemed acceptable to help determine the effect of the proposed development on the openness of the Green Belt.

Photomontage 1: Close distance view west; taken from the edge of the proposed sales area, within the site. The photograph location is not publicly accessible.



Predevelopment



Postdevelopment

ASSESSMENT:

The proposed garden centre building will see an expansion of the on-site built form to the north and east, across areas of existing hardstanding. However, dense boundary vegetation, as well as the existing on-site built form, already preclude any views of the surrounding landscape. As such the development will only affect openness in respect of a small part of the site itself.

Conversely, the removal of the redundant outbuilding will allow for greater visual openness across the site, up to the eastern boundary where the community building is proposed.

Overall the proposed development will have a negligible effect in respect of the Green Belt's key characteristic of openness as the land on which the garden centre building is proposed is already developed with hardstanding and the visual envelope of the site is already restricted by existing boundary vegetation and development.

Photomontage 2: Close distance view north-west; taken from the edge of the M4 Spur, in land under the applicant's control.



Predevelopment



Postdevelopment

ASSESSMENT:

The new garden centre building will be seen to expand to the east, however it is well contained by site boundary tree cover, which also creates a backdrop to the development. Furthermore, while slightly higher than the existing greenhouse, the proposed roof colour of the new building, coupled with the new tree planting, will reduce the prominence of the on-site built form and will help subsume it into the landscape.

Overall the proposed development will have a negligible effect in respect of the Green Belt's key characteristic of openness, moreover, the reduction in prominence of the on-site built form will actually benefit the perceived visual openness, with built form longer being readily apparent.

Photomontage 3: Close distance, view east; taken from Sipson Road, opposite the site access.



Predevelopment



Postdevelopment

ASSESSMENT:	Management of the site frontage and enhancement of the access will open up views into the site, with a greater percentage of built form being visible as a result. In respect of the garden centre building, there will be an increase in visible built form, however this will not result in the loss of any long ranging views across the site. Furthermore, the prominence of the visible development will be reduced as a result in the change in roof pitch and colour. The community building will be seen as a new area of development on the edge of the site, however its construction will not preclude any long ranging views across the area due to dense boundary vegetation already restricting the visual envelope. Overall the development will only affect openness in respect of a small part of the site, with the effect being largely negligible due to the high level of containment. Moreover, change is primarily as a result of the enhancement of the site frontage and the removal of dense pernicious weeds, as opposed to the development itself.
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Overall significance of visual effect

5.2.12 The assessment considers the effect of the proposed development on the openness of the Green Belt in respect of physical openness (is the site free of development/is there a form of development already present?) and its visual openness (what kind of views are there across site and to what degree are these restricted by development, both existing and proposed, as well as other features?).

5.2.13 Overall, the percentage of on-site development is largely similar to the baseline condition, with the proposed garden centre building being located exclusively on an area of existing hardstanding, as is also the case with the associated sales area. While the community building is located in a previously undeveloped area, it is largely similar in size to the existing outbuilding to be demolished, furthermore the area of hardstanding associated with this outbuilding is to be removed and returned to grass.

5.2.14 Any change is primarily as a result of the effect on visual openness, due to the height of the development and relocation of the on-site built form, rather than physical openness, as much of the site is already developed with hardstanding. While new built form will reduce several short ranging views across the site itself, no long ranging views beyond the site will be lost as these are already restricted by existing development and boundary vegetation. Moreover, in terms of perceived openness, the proposed roof colour of the new garden centre building will be less prominent than the existing greenhouse, helping subsume the new development into the landscape.

5.3 CONSTRUCTION EFFECTS

5.3.1 During construction, plant and materials will be visible. However, the construction effects associated with the development will be temporary and will have no lasting adverse effects on the recorded landscape and visual receptors. No further points of access will be required to allow for the construction of the development. Appropriate storage of construction materials and equipment will help minimise any effects during construction.

5.4 RESIDUAL EFFECTS

5.4.1 Post development there will be no residual effects following the construction of the development, with the landscape structure being repaired as part of the proposals. There will potentially be secondary effects as a result of the site being brought back into commercial use, with an increase in traffic along Sipson Lane, as well as light spill resulting from the development during darker times of the year. However, these are effects that would have also occurred during the operation of the original garden centre, moreover light spill from the development will be largely subsumed into that created by the street lighting along Sipson Road and the M4 Spur. Overall there will be no significant residual effects on both landscape and visual receptors.

6. RECOMMENDED MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENT

6.1.1 The following recommendations are appropriate to reduce the significance of the potential landscape and visual effects of the proposed development, with the aim being to further integrate the site into the landscape while providing enhancements to the area's landscape structure through a comprehensive scheme of planting and management. An indicative landscaping scheme has been provided as a part of the application and is largely successful in respect of addressing potential effects. As such it will be incorporated into the mitigation strategy for the site, being adapted and appropriately detailed as necessary.

6.1.2 Mitigation measures will mainly focus on the retention, enhancement and management of vegetation within the site, as well as supplementing the existing landscape structure around the site boundary. This will be achieved through the use of hedge planting, as indicated in the development proposals plan, in addition to further hedging along the site's eastern boundary. Hedge Planting along the southern boundary should be restricted as it could affect the open character of the site and adjacent field. New tree planting will create structure within the site, while also helping integrate the proposed development into the landscape. The landscape proposals aim to also provide enhancements to the green infrastructure network around the site, through a comprehensive scheme of new planting and management of existing vegetation.

6.1.3 Proposals will be informed by the guidance provided in the relevant character assessments and associated documents. Landscape and ecological enhancement will form a key part of the proposals, with existing vegetation being retained, managed and enhanced as appropriate, as well as new areas of habitat being created. New planting will focus on the use of native species, with the aim being to soften views of the proposed development while also establishing an appropriate landscape setting for the development.

Management and Enhancement of Existing Planting:

- Trees and other vegetation marked for removal should be cleared prior to development commencing. Tree removal should avoid the bird nesting season (March to September)
- Suitable root protection area stand-offs and protection measures should be applied around all vegetation to be retained where necessary.
- Existing poor quality/diseased vegetation or invasive species should be removed and replaced with appropriate species if necessary.

- All retained vegetation should be appropriately managed, with a focus on undertaking remedial work, including thinning, removal of low growth and crown raising as necessary.
- The remainder of the undeveloped rough grassland around the development be managed and all pernicious weeds removed.
- The clumps of small trees and bushes to the north-east and south-west of the site should be managed appropriately, with plants gradually being removed to allow the best specimens to grow on to maturity.

Proposed Mitigation and Planting:

- The following recommendations should be taken into account in respect of plants being used for mitigation purposes:
 - ♦ All new planting, including planting for the purposes of replacement should comprise appropriate native species characteristic of the area.
 - ♦ At planting, a range of tree sizes should be used to create instant impact and structure.
- Strategic tree planting, including native and amenity species, should take place within the locations indicated on the development proposals plan, with trees being used to establish an appropriate landscape setting for the development and integrate the site into the surrounding landscape.
- Amenity tree planting around the site boundary should be restricted, with the exception of trees along the site frontage.
- Additional tree planting should take place to the east of the site where the sales area abuts the adjacent field.
- Hedging should be established as indicated on the development proposals plan, additional hedging should be planted along the site's eastern boundary.
- Hedging should be continued along the entirety of the field/M4 Spur boundary, however this can be established using smaller stock.
- The proposed hedgerow along Sipson Lane should be grown and managed at 2.00-2.50m in height, comprising the site frontage hedge species mix.
- The remainder of the proposed boundary hedging should be grown and managed at 3.00-3.50m in height, comprising the mixed native hedge species mix.
- Shrub/herbaceous beds should be planted within the parking area, to further break up the hardstanding and enhance the setting of the development.

6.2 PROPOSED PLANTING

TREES

6.2.1 Trees are to be pit planted at, at least 4m centres. All 'Standard' trees should be single staked, while all 'Selected Standard' and 'Heavy Standard' trees should be double staked. All trees will be mesh guarded to prevent damage by vermin.

Native Tree Species					
Scientific name	Common name	Specification	Girth (cm)	Approx. height (m)	Clear stem height (m)
<i>Acer campestre</i>	Field Maple	Standard	8-10	2.50/3.00	1.75/2.00
<i>Betula pendula</i>	Silver birch	Standard	8-10	2.50/3.00	1.75/2.00
<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	Hornbeam	Heavy Standard	12-14	3.50/4.00	Min 2.00
<i>Malus sylvestris</i>	Crab apple	Standard	8-10	2.50/3.00	1.75/2.00
<i>Prunus padus</i>	Bird cherry	Standard	8-10	2.50/3.00	1.75/2.00
<i>Sorbus torminalis</i>	Wild service tree	Standard	8-10	2.50/3.00	1.75/2.00
<i>Tilia cordata</i>	Small-leaved Lime	Heavy Standard	12-14	3.50/4.00	Min 2.00
<i>Quercus robur</i>	English Oak	Extra Heavy Standard	14-16	4.00/4.50	Min 2.00

Amenity Tree Species					
Scientific name	Common name	Specification	Girth (cm)	Approx. height (m)	Clear stem height (m)
<i>Acer campestre</i> 'Queen Elizabeth'	Field Maple 'Queen Elizabeth'	Selected Standard	10-12	3.00/3.50	Min 2.00
<i>Acer rubrum</i>	Red maple	Standard	8-10	2.50/3.00	1.75/2.00
<i>Amelanchier x grandiflora</i> 'Autumn Brilliance'	Serviceberry 'Autumn Brilliance'	Standard	8-10	2.50/3.00	1.75/2.00
<i>Betula pendula</i> 'Dalecarlica'	Ornäs birch	Standard	8-10	2.50/3.00	1.75/2.00
<i>Crataegus laevigata</i> 'Paul's Scarlet'	Hawthorn 'Paul's Scarlet'	Standard	8-10	2.50/3.00	1.75/2.00
<i>Malus tschonoskii</i>	Chonosuki crabapple	Standard	8-10	2.50/3.00	1.75/2.00
<i>Sorbus x intermedia</i>	Swedish whitebeam	Standard	8-10	2.50/3.00	1.75/2.00
<i>Zelkova serrata</i>	Keaki	Standard	8-10	2.50/3.00	1.75/2.00

HEDGEROW PLANTING

6.2.2 All hedging is to be notch-planted in a double staggered row at 45cm centres using 5 plants per linear metre. Plants will be individually staked with bamboo and guarded with spiral guards to prevent damage by vermin. A dense hedgerow structure will be maintained by not allowing hedgerow species to grow to tree sized proportions.

Mixed Native Hedge Species Mix				
Scientific name	Common name	Specification	Approx. height (cm)*	%
<i>Acer campestre</i>	Field maple	Transplant	45-60	5
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel	Transplant	45-60	25
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	Transplant	45-60	45
<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>	Spindle	Transplant	45-60	5
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly	Pot-grown (2ltr)	-	2.5
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn	Transplant	45-60	10
<i>Viburnum latana</i>	Wayfaring tree	Transplant	45-60	5
<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	Guelder rose	Transplant	45-60	2.5

*Additional hedge planting along the M4 Spur should use 30cm transplants and holly from 1ltr pots.

Site Frontage Hedge Species Mix				
Scientific name	Common name	Specification	Approx. height (cm)	%
<i>Acer campestre</i>	Field maple	Transplant	60-80	25
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel	Transplant	60-80	15
<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	Hornbeam	Transplant	60-80	35
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly	Pot-grown (2ltr)	-	5
<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>	Wild privet	Transplant	60-80	10
<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	Common honeysuckle	Pot-grown (1.5ltr)	-	5
<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	Guelder rose	Transplant	60-80	5

SHRUB/HERBACEOUS PLANTING

6.2.3 All plants are to be either pit or notch-planted depending on pot size. Plants will be individually staked with bamboo and guarded with spiral guards to prevent damage by vermin.

Shrub/Herbaceous Bed Mix				
Scientific name	Common name	Min. Pot Size (L)	Density (m²)	%
<i>Bergenia</i> 'Sunningdale'	<i>Elephant's Ears</i> 'Sunningdale'	2	8	15
<i>Berberis thunbergii</i> f. <i>atropurpurea</i> 'Atropurpurea Nana'	Japanese barberry 'Atropurpurea Nana'	3	5	15
<i>Echinacea purpurea</i> 'Baby Swan White'	Purple Coneflower 'Baby Swan White'	3	6	25
<i>Epimedium</i> 'Fire Dragon'	<i>Epimedium</i> 'Fire Dragon'	2	7	25
<i>Geranium phaeum</i>	Black Widow	3	4	10
<i>Mahonia aquifolium</i> 'Apollo'	Oregon Grape 'Apollo'	3	4	10

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The key considerations when determining the acceptability of the potential landscape and visual effects of the proposals are: the receptors that will be potentially affected by the development and how far any effects are/can be mitigated. Of particular importance to the consideration of the developments overall effect is whether the development will have notable significant effects on the landscape character and visual amenity of the study area, particularly that which is associated with the Green Belt.

7.2 As a result of the assessment of Landscape and Visual Effects, it has been determined that, due to the site's established built form context, and high level of containment within the landscape, any potential effect on landscape and visual receptors will be lessened. Overall the proposed development will not be significantly detrimental to any of the key characteristics or descriptions of the site and the surrounding landscape as identified in this document, in particular the essential characteristics of Green Belt (openness and permanence). Taken as a whole, the development will have an overall *Minor* effect, which is **not** considered significant under the LVIA methodology used in this assessment. The overall Nature of Effect of the proposals will be *Positive*, in large part due to the enhancement of what currently appears as a redundant and unmanaged area of development on the edge of Sipson.

7.3 The mitigation and enhancement recommendations detailed in Section 6 have built upon the indicative landscaping scheme in response to the findings of the landscape and visual assessment undertaken in Section 5. They aim to further integrate the development into the landscape through additional planting and species selection.

EFFECT OF MITIGATION ON LANDSCAPE RECEPTORS

7.4 At Implementation: The Overall Significance of Effect and Nature of Effect will remain largely the same as if only the indicative landscaping scheme had been implemented. However, in both instances, the extra planting proposed will have localised benefits in respect of biodiversity and green infrastructure gain.

7.5 At Maturity: The Overall Significance of Effect will remain minor; however, the additional planting will provide further enhancements to the area, with the site being better integrated into the landscape. Furthermore, the additional planting to the east will have notable benefits in respect of biodiversity, in particular as a result of the creation of unbroken green links around the site and along the edge of the motorway.

EFFECT OF MITIGATION ON VISUAL RECEPTORS

7.6 At Implementation: The Significance of Visual Effect and Nature of Effect will be largely the same from the majority of Viewpoints as if only the indicative landscaping scheme had been implemented. However, the additional planning along the site's eastern and western boundary, will mean that views of the development from the motorway and Sipson Lane will be softened and a backdrop created to the development when viewed from the west.

7.7 At Maturity: The overall Significance of Effect will remain *Minor*, however the additional planting will mean that from several receptor locations the Magnitude of Effect will be reduced to Negligible with the site being better contained within the landscape. Overall the additional planting will help filter more views and create a more appropriate setting for the development, specifically in respect of views from the east. The overall Nature of Effect will remain *Positive* however, the proposed species mixes will have benefits in respect of visual amenity.

7.8 The indicative landscape scheme, coupled with the recommended mitigation and enhancement measures, will mean that the development can not only be integrated into the wider landscape but will also have localised landscape and visual benefits. Taken as a whole, the proposed development post-mitigation will still have a *Minor* effect, however the Magnitude of Effect on specific receptors will be reduced. There will also be localised ecological benefits as a result of the appropriate repair and management of existing vegetation and establishment of additional areas of green infrastructure.

7.9 Taking account of the proposed landscape mitigation and enhancement recommendations, the proposed development can be undertaken in compliance with the relevant guidance and policies in the NPPF, with the application meeting the criteria for appropriate development within the Green Belt as listed in paragraph 145. Bullet Point d of the NPPF. Furthermore, it complies with Strategic Policies listed in Hillingdon Council's Local Plan (Part 1) and the saved policies from the Hillingdon UDP. Additionally, it is also compliant with the emerging Development Management Policies in Part 2 of the Local Plan

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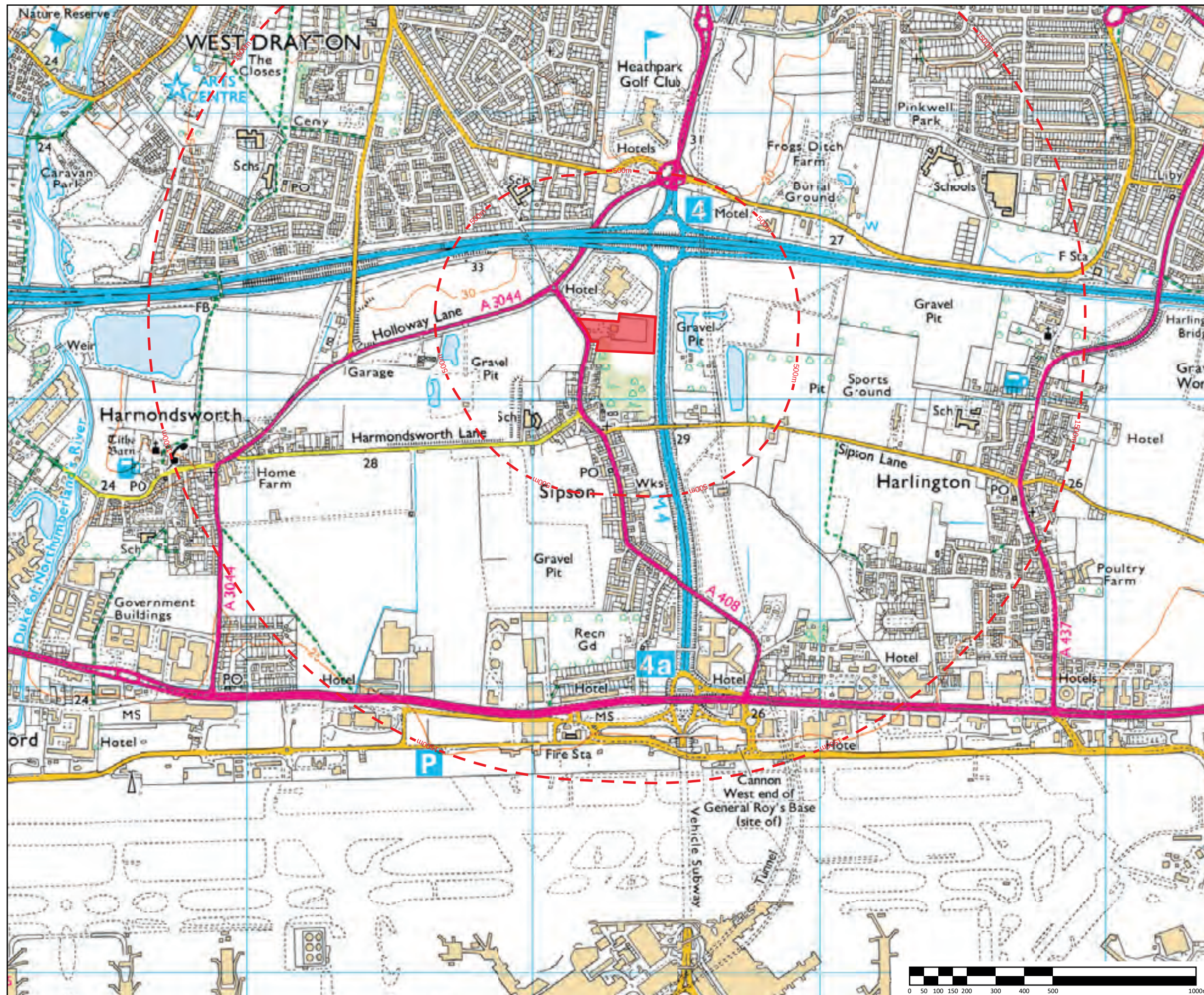
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ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL



KEY:

- Site
- Off-set from site boundary

Public Rights of Way

- Footpath
- Byway open to all traffic
- Restricted byway

Roads

- Motorway
- Main Road
- Road generally more than 4m wide
- Road generally less than 4m wide
- Other road, drive or track

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Project:
Garden Centre Redevelopment - Sipson

On behalf of:
Lewdown Holdings Ltd

Drawing title:
Location plan

Drawing number:
WHL-907-01

Scale:
1:12500 @ A3

Rev:
DB: GH

Date:
Aug 19

CB: WH



KEY:



- Site

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Project:
Garden Centre Redevelopment - Sipson

On behalf of:
Lewdown Holdings Ltd

Drawing title:
Vertical Aerial

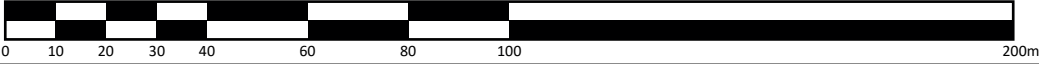
Drawing number:
WHL-907-02

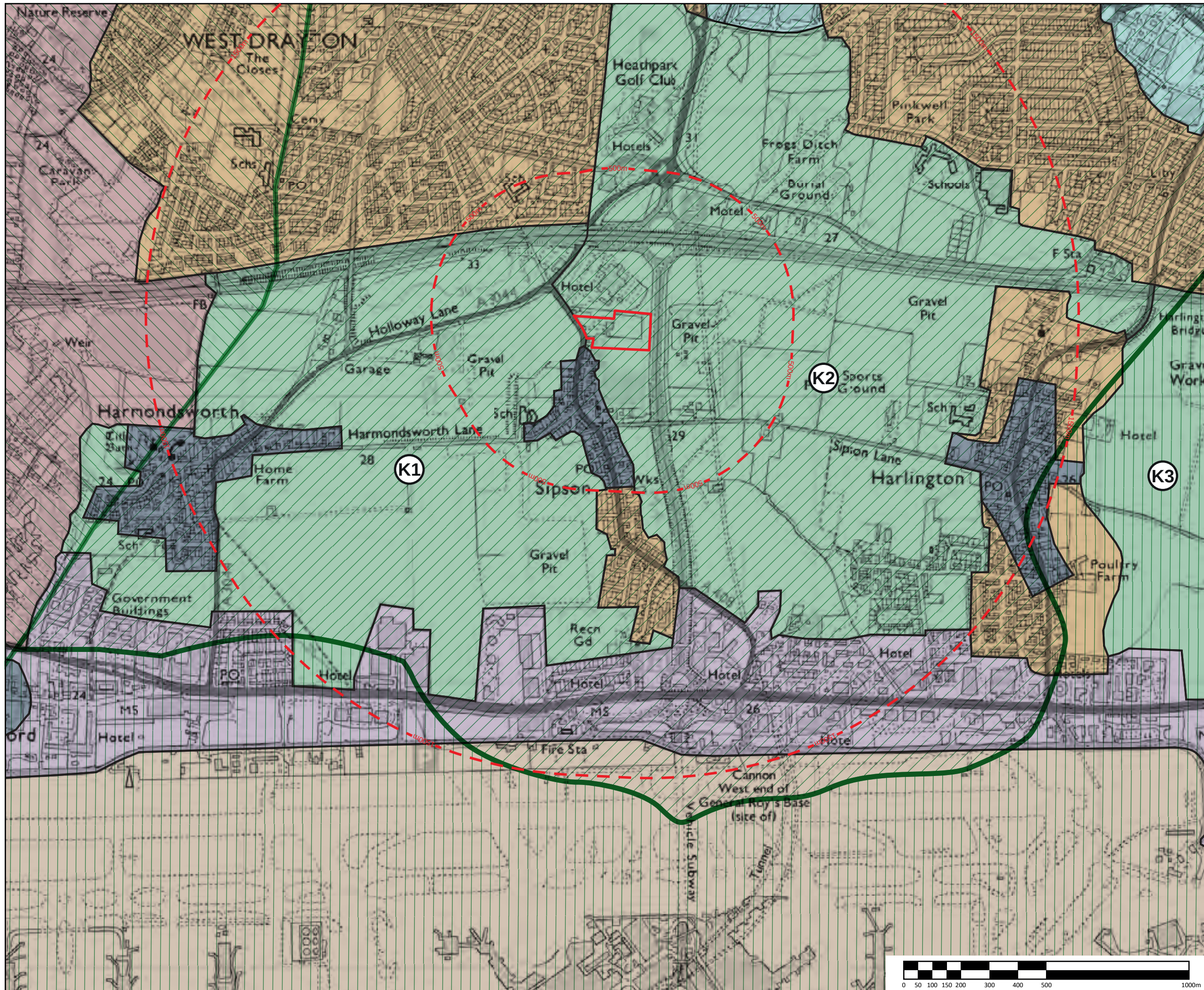
Rev:
Date:
Aug 19

Scale:
1:1500 @ A3

DB:
GH/KJ

CB:
WH





KEY:

- Site
- Off-set from site boundary

Natural England National Character Area Profiles

The whole study area lies within
NCA: 115. Thames Valley

London's Natural Signatures

- LCT: 1. Colne River Valley
- LCT: 10. Hayes Gravels
- LCT: 12. Hounslow Gravels

Hillingdon's Landscape Character Assessment

- LCT: A. Floodplain
LCA: A4. Lower Colne Floodplain - Frays Island to Stanwell Moor
- LCT: K. Open Gravel Terrace
LCA: K1. Harmondsworth Open Gravel Terrace
LCA: K2. Harlington Open Gravel Terrace
LCA: K3. Cranford Open Gravel Terrace
- LCT: L. Gravel Terrace Infrastructure
LCA: L1. Heathrow
- TCT: Historic Core
- TCT: Inter-war Suburb/Metroland
- TCT: Commercial Airport
- TCT: Industrial and Commercial Canal Side

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Project:
Garden Centre Redevelopment - Sipson

On behalf of:
Lewdown Holdings Ltd

Drawing title:
Landscape Character

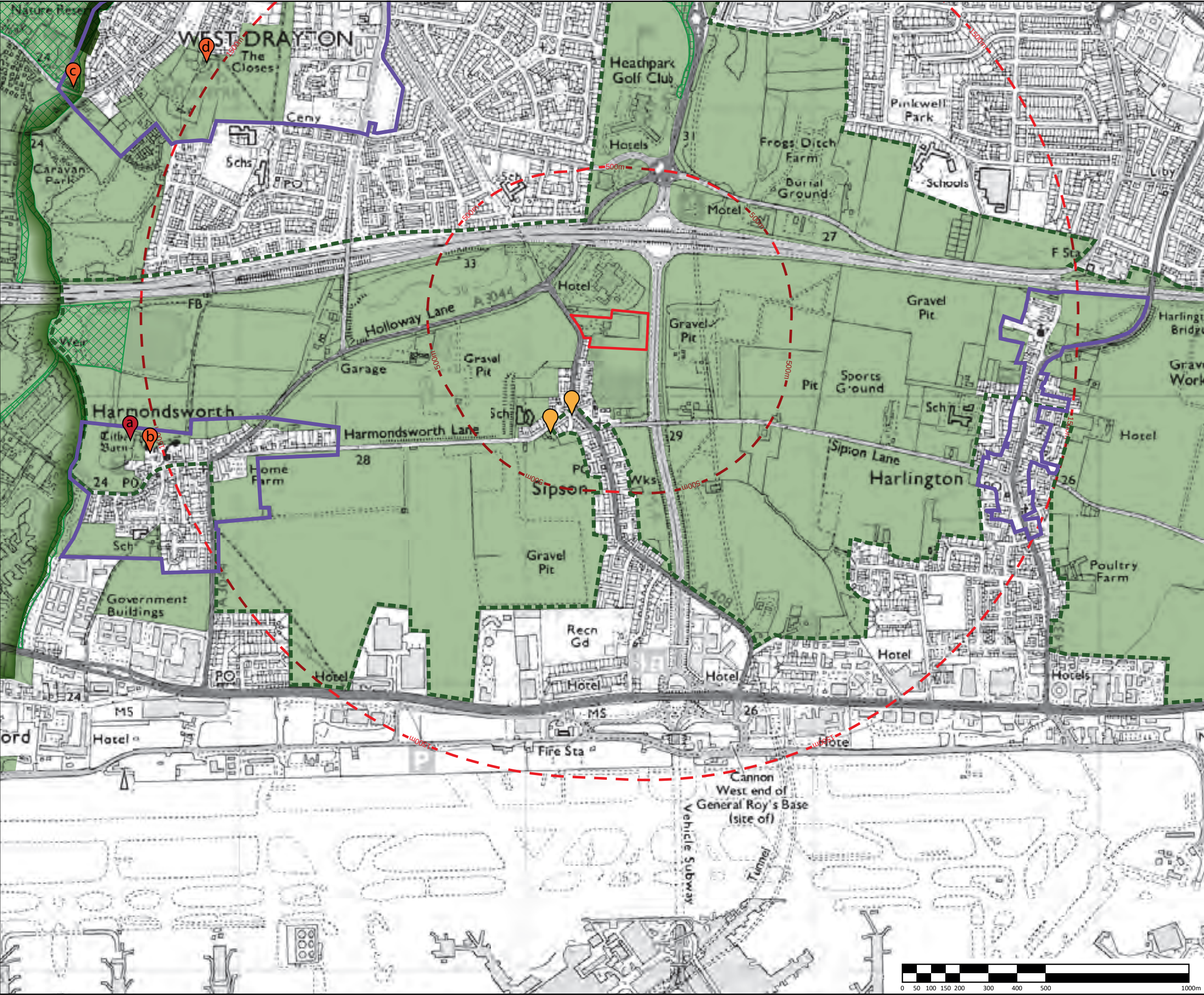
Drawing number:
WHL-907-03

Scale:
1:12500 @ A3

Rev:
GH/KJ

Date:
Aug 19

CB:
WH



KEY:

- Site
- Off-set from site boundary

Statutory Designations

- Metropolis Green Belt

Natural Environment Designations

- Nature Conservation Sites of Metropolitan or Borough Grade I Importance
- Nature Conservation Sites of Borough Grade II or Local Importance
- Nature Reserve
- Areas of Environmental Opportunity
- Colne Valley Park

Heritage Designations

- Conservation Area
- Grade I listed
 - a - The Great Barn, Harmondsworth
- Grade II* listed
 - b - Church of St Mary
 - c - Fray's Cottage Old Mill House
 - d - Southlands
- Grade II listed (within 500m of the site)

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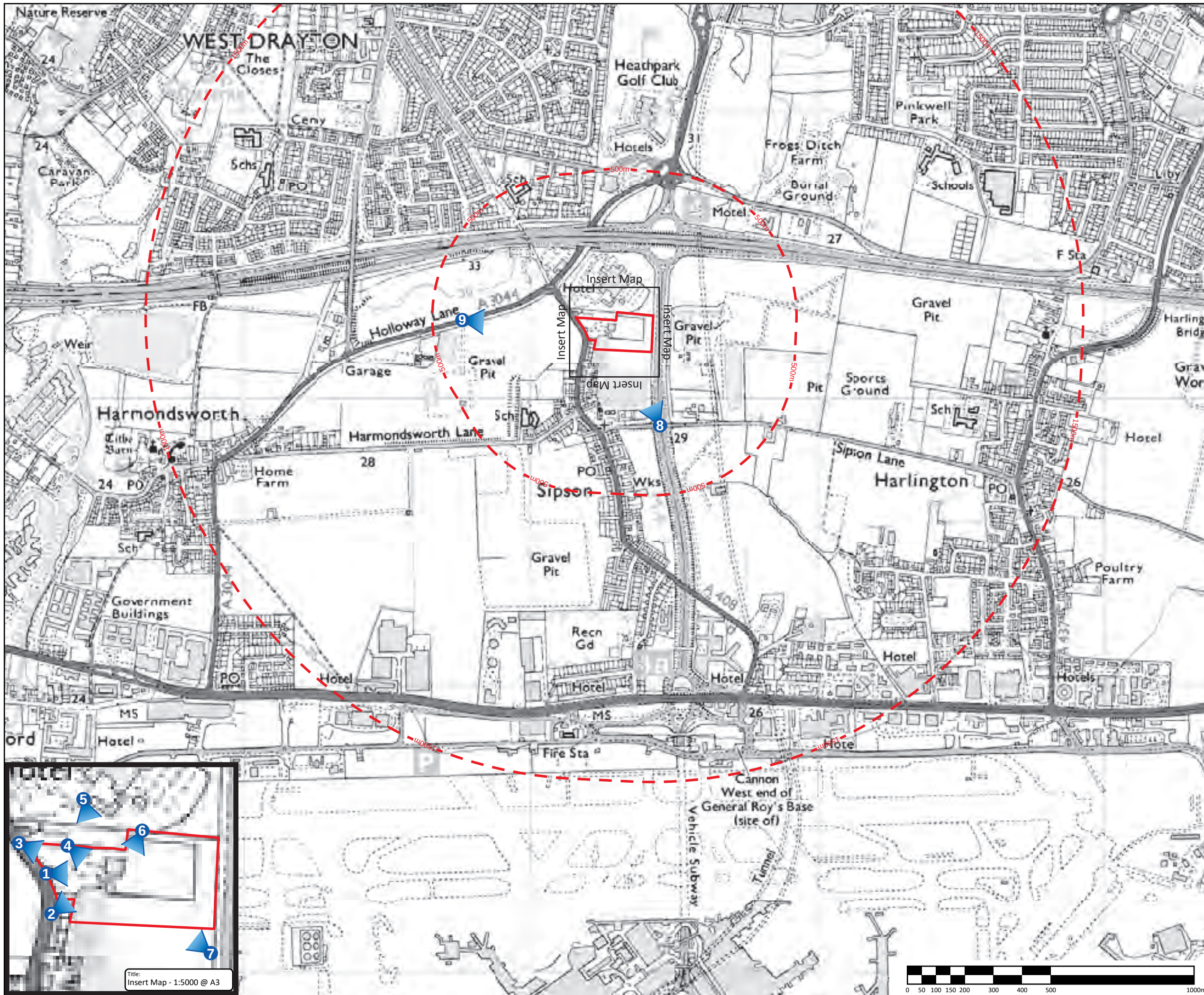
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Project:
Garden Centre Redevelopment - Sipsen

On behalf of:
Lewdown Holdings Ltd

Drawing title:
Designations

Drawing number: WHL-907-04	Rev: GH/KJ	Date: Aug 19
Scale: 1:12500 @ A3	DB: CB	WH



KEY:

- Site
- Off-set from site boundary
- Viewpoint

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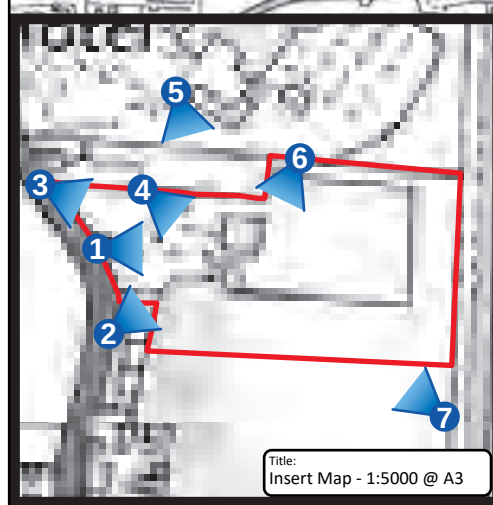
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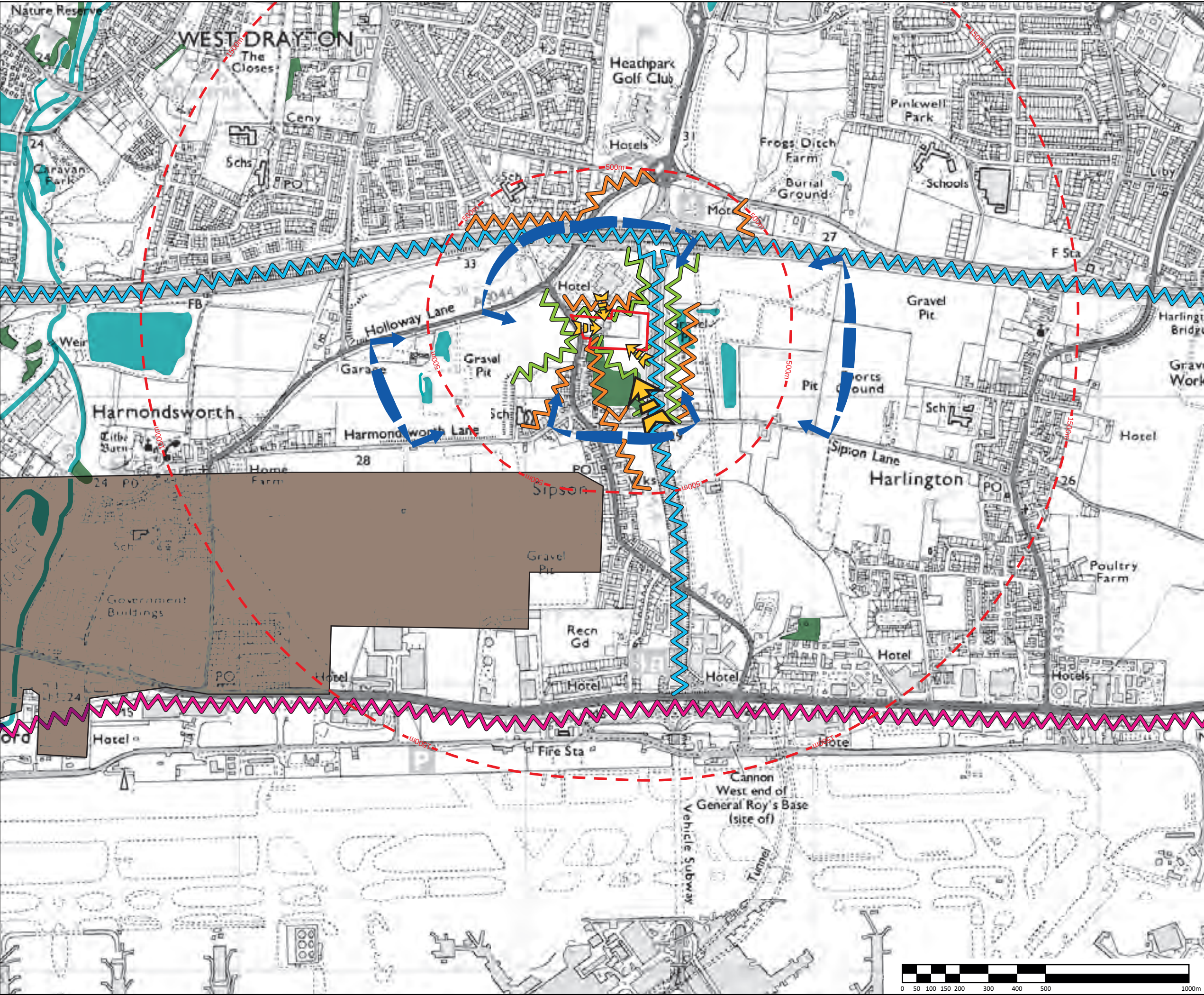
Project:
Garden Centre Redevelopment - Sipson

On behalf of:
Lewdown Holdings Ltd

Drawing title:
Viewpoint Plan

Drawing number: WHL-907-05	Rev: GH	Date: Aug 19
Scale: 1:12500 @ A3	DB: GH	CB: WH





- KEY:**
- Site
 - Off-set from site boundary
 - Proposed heathrow expansion area
 - Significant vegetation
 - Significant water bodies
 - Trees and hedgerows obscuring/ filtering views
 - Heathrow Airport
 - M4 Motorway
 - Other notable development within 500m
 - Partial/filtered views
 - No views

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Project:
Garden Centre Redevelopment - Sipson

On behalf of:
Lewdown Holdings Ltd

Drawing title:
Landscape and Visual Analysis

Drawing number: WHL-907-06	Rev: 	Date: Aug 19
Scale: 1:12500 @ A3	DB: GH/KJ	CB: WH

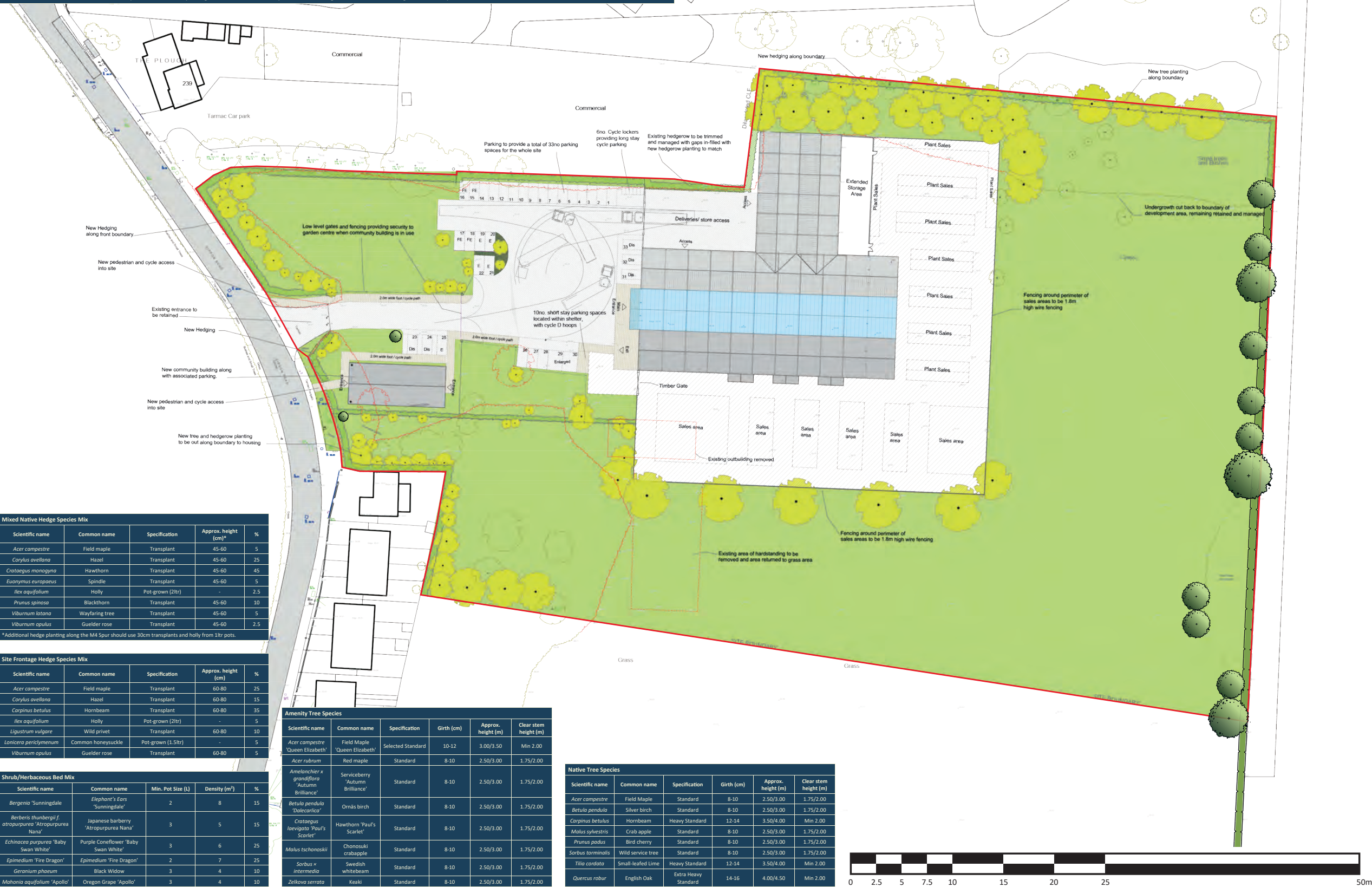
Notes:

Management and Enhancement of Existing Planting:

- Trees and other vegetation marked for removal should be cleared prior to development commencing. Tree removal should avoid the bird nesting season (March to September)
- Suitable root protection area stand-offs and protection measures should be applied around all vegetation to be retained where necessary.
- Existing poor quality/diseased vegetation or invasive species should be removed and replaced with appropriate species if necessary.
- All retained vegetation should be appropriately managed, with a focus on undertaking remedial work, including thinning, removal of low growth and crown raising as necessary.
- The remainder of the undeveloped rough grassland around the development be managed and all pernicious weeds removed.
- The clumps of small trees and bushes to the north-east and south-west of the site should be managed appropriately, with plants gradually being removed to allow the best specimens to grow onto maturity.

Proposed Mitigation and Planting:

- The following recommendations should be taken into account in respect of plants being used for mitigation purposes:
 - All new planting, including planting for the purposes of replacement should comprise appropriate native species characteristic of the area.
 - At planting, a range of tree sizes should be used to create instant impact and structure.
- Strategic tree planting, including native and amenity species, should take place within the locations indicated on the development proposals plan, with trees being used to establish an appropriate landscape setting for the development and integrate the site into the surrounding landscape.
- Amenity tree planting around the site boundary should be restricted, with the exception of trees along the site frontage.
- Additional tree planting should take place to the east of the site where the sales area abuts the adjacent field.
- Hedging should be established as indicated on the development proposals plan, additional hedging should be planted along the site's eastern boundary.
- Hedging should be continued along the entirety of the field/M4 Spur boundary, however this can be established using smaller stock.
- The proposed hedgerow along Sipson Lane should be grown and managed at 2.00-2.50m in height, comprising the site frontage hedge species mix.
- The remainder of the proposed boundary hedging should be grown and managed at 3.00-3.50m in height, comprising the mixed native hedge species mix.
- Shrub/herbaceous beds should be planted within the parking area, to further break up the hardstanding and enhance the setting of the development.



Mixed Native Hedge Species Mix				
Scientific name	Common name	Specification	Approx. height (cm)*	%
<i>Acer campestre</i>	Field maple	Transplant	45-60	5
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel	Transplant	45-60	25
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	Transplant	45-60	45
<i>Evonymus europaeus</i>	Spindle	Transplant	45-60	5
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly	Pot-grown (2ltr)	-	2.5
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn	Transplant	45-60	10
<i>Viburnum latana</i>	Wayfaring tree	Transplant	45-60	5
<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	Gelder rose	Transplant	45-60	2.5

*Additional hedge planting along the M4 Spur should use 30cm transplants and holly from 1ltr pots.

Site Frontage Hedge Species Mix				
Scientific name	Common name	Specification	Approx. height (cm)	%
<i>Acer campestre</i>	Field maple	Transplant	60-80	25
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel	Transplant	60-80	15
<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	Hornbeam	Transplant	60-80	35
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly	Pot-grown (2ltr)	-	5
<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>	Wild privet	Transplant	60-80	10
<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	Common honeysuckle	Pot-grown (1.5ltr)	-	5
<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	Gelder rose	Transplant	60-80	5

Shrub/Herbaceous Bed Mix				
Scientific name	Common name	Min. Pot Size (L)	Density (m ²)	%
<i>Bergenia 'Sunningdale'</i>	Elephant's Ears 'Sunningdale'	2	8	15
<i>Berberis thunbergii f. atropurpurea</i> 'Atropurpurea Nana'	Japanese barberry 'Atropurpurea Nana'	3	5	15
<i>Echinacea purpurea</i> 'Baby Swan White'	Purple Coneflower 'Baby Swan White'	3	6	25
<i>Epimedium 'Fire Dragon'</i>	Epimedium 'Fire Dragon'	2	7	25
<i>Geranium phaeum</i>	Black Widow	3	4	10
<i>Mahonia aquifolium 'Apollo'</i>	Oregon Grape 'Apollo'	3	4	10

Amenity Tree Species					
Scientific name	Common name	Specification	Girth (cm)	Approx. height (m)	Clear stem height (m)
<i>Acer campestre</i> 'Queen Elizabeth'	Field Maple 'Queen Elizabeth'	Selected Standard	10-12	3.00/3.50	Min 2.00
<i>Acer rubrum</i>	Red maple	Standard	8-10	2.50/3.00	1.75/2.00
<i>Amelanchier x grandiflora</i> 'Autumn Brilliance'	Serviceberry 'Autumn Brilliance'	Standard	8-10	2.50/3.00	1.75/2.00
<i>Betula pendula</i> 'Dalecarlica'	Ornamental birch	Standard	8-10	2.50/3.00	1.75/2.00
<i>Crataegus laevigata</i> 'Paul's Scarlet'	Hawthorn 'Paul's Scarlet'	Standard	8-10	2.50/3.00	1.75/2.00
<i>Malus tschonoskii</i>	Chonokaki crabapple	Standard	8-10	2.50/3.00	1.75/2.00
<i>Sorbus torminalis</i>	Wild service tree	Standard	8-10	2.50/3.00	1.75/2.00
<i>Sorbus torminalis</i>	Wild service tree	Standard	8-10	2.50/3.00	1.75/2.00
<i>Tilia cordata</i>	Small-leaved Lime	Heavy Standard	12-14	3.50/4.00	Min 2.00
<i>Quercus robur</i>	English Oak	Extra Heavy Standard	14-16	4.00/4.50	Min 2.00

Native Tree Species					
Scientific name	Common name	Specification	Girth (cm)	Approx. height (m)	Clear stem height (m)
<i>Acer campestre</i>	Field Maple	Standard	8-10	2.50/3.00	1.75/2.00
<i>Betula pendula</i>	Silver birch	Standard	8-10	2.50/3.00	1.75/2.00
<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	Hornbeam	Heavy Standard	12-14	3.50/4.00	Min 2.00
<i>Malus sylvestris</i>	Crab apple	Standard	8-10	2.50/3.00	1.75/2.00
<i>Prunus padus</i>	Bird cherry	Standard	8-10	2.50/3.00	1.75/2.00
<i>Sorbus torminalis</i>	Wild service tree	Standard	8-10	2.50/3.00	1.75/2.00
<i>Tilia cordata</i>	Small-leaved Lime	Heavy Standard	12-14	3.50/4.00	Min 2.00
<i>Quercus robur</i>	English Oak	Extra Heavy Standard	14-16	4.00/4.50	Min 2.00

KEY:

- Site
- Trees to be removed
- Scrub to be removed
- Trees to be retained and managed
- Other vegetation to be retained and managed

BCM - Indicative landscape scheme

- Trees to be planted
- Hedgerows to be planted
- Rough grassland to be managed and all pernicious weeds removed

WHLandscape - Mitigation and Enhancement Recommendations

- Additional tree planting
- Additional hedgerow planting
- Shrub/herbaceous beds

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Original base plan produced by BCM. Drawing Title: Proposed Site Plan. Drawing Number: 7290.004 (Rev: C).

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Project:
Garden Centre Redevelopment - Sipson

On behalf of:
Lewdown Holdings Ltd

Drawing title:
Mitigation Strategy

Drawing number:
WHL-907-07

Scale:
1:400 @ A3

Rev:
GH

Date:
Aug 19

DB:
WH

APPENDICES

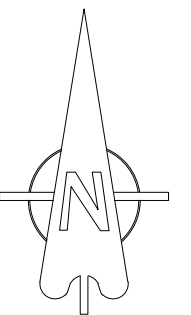
APPENDIX 1: DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS



Creation Date Sept 2018

Revisions			
Rev	Date	Description	By
A	25.10.2018	Sketch issue	JA
B	02.07.19	General changes to the car parking area	JP
C	04.07.19	Change to footpath / cycle way location	JP

NOTES:
1. This drawing remains the copyright of BCM
2. All dimensions and levels are to be checked on site prior to works commencing.
3. Do not scale from this drawing. Use figured dimensions only.
4. Any discrepancies found are to be reported to the Project Manager immediately.
5. This drawing is to be read in conjunction with sub-consultants and specialists drawings.
6. CAD File name: SCHEME REV E.dwg
7. If BCM logo is not in colour this is not an original drawing



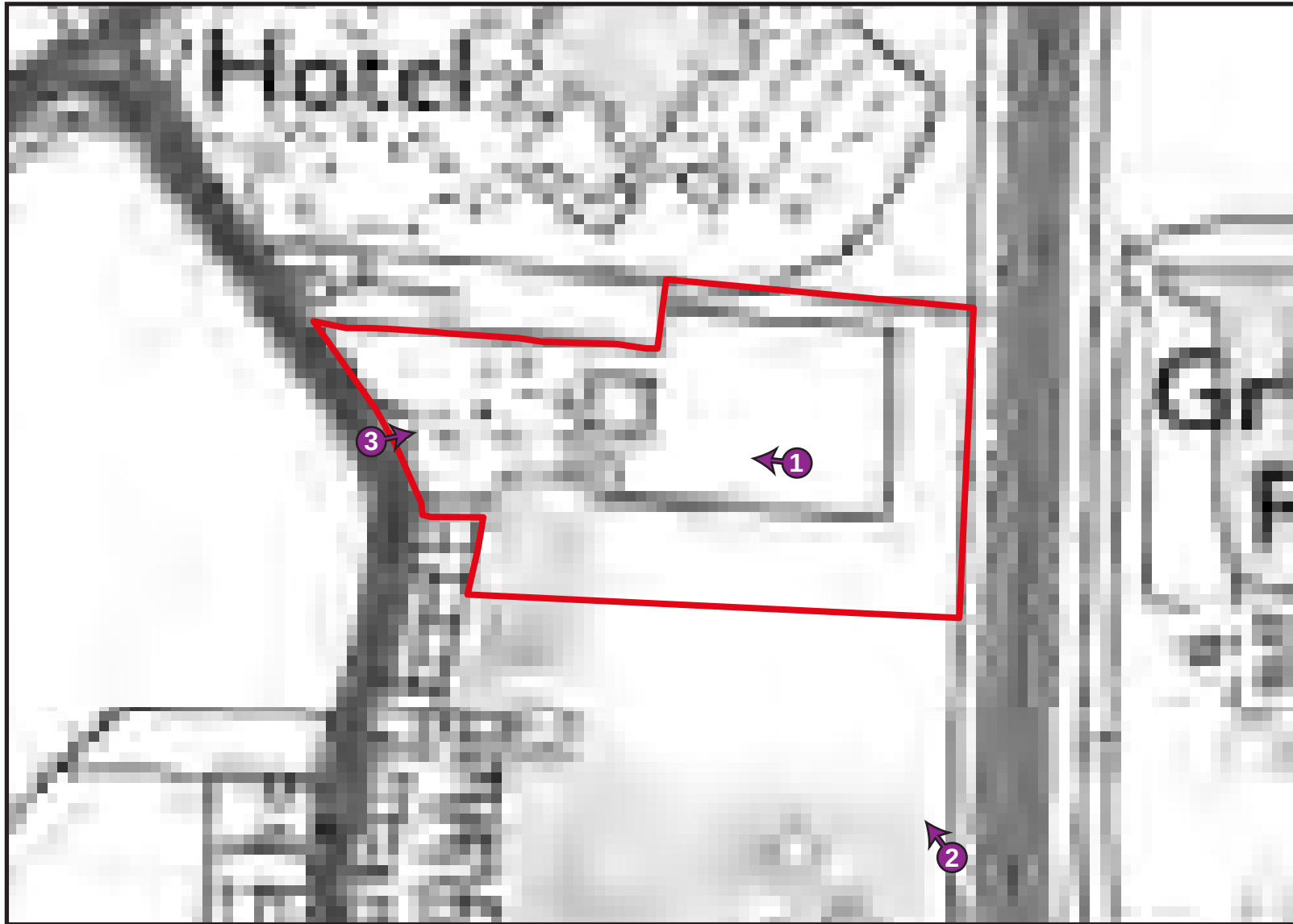
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1:200 Meters

PLANNING

Client	Lewdown Holdings LTD.		
Project Name	Heathrow Garden Centre Sipson Road		
Drawing Title	Proposed Site Plan		
Drawn By	JA		
Scale	1:200	Sheet Size	A1
Drawing No.	7290.004	Revision	C

BCM
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Sutton Scotney
Near Winchester
Hampshire
SO21 3NZ
t 01962 763 900
www.bcm.co.uk

APPENDIX 2: PHOTOMONTAGES



Photomontage Viewpoint Location Plan (1:250 @ A4)



Photomontage Viewpoint 1: Predevelopment

SDMVisuals



Photomontage Viewpoint 1: Postdevelopment

SDMVisuals



Photomontage Viewpoint 2: Predevelopment

SDMVisuals



Photomontage Viewpoint 2: Postdevelopment

SDMVisuals



Photomontage Viewpoint 3: Predevelopment

SDMVisuals



Photomontage Viewpoint 3: Postdevelopment

SDMVisuals

APPENDIX 3: VIEWPOINT PHOTOGRAPHS



VP: 1	Viewpoint direction: East	Approximate distance from site: Adjacent
Taken by: WH	Photograph date: December 2018	OS map elevation: Approx. 28.70m AOD (Survey data)



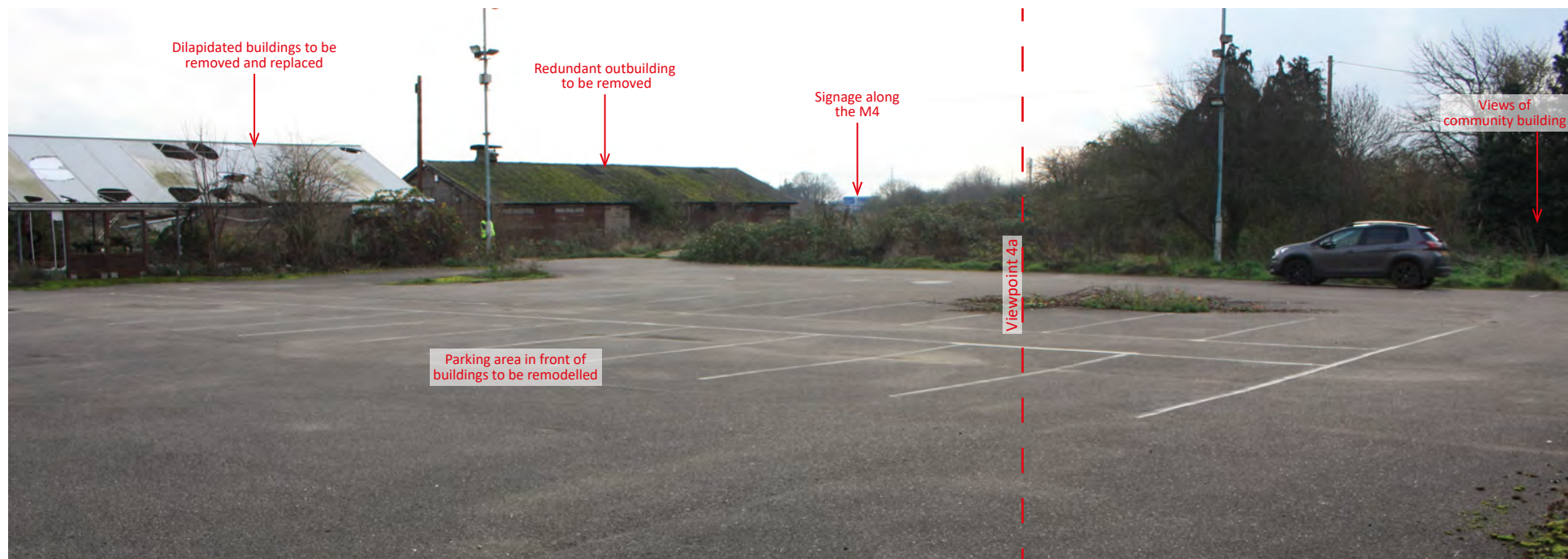
VP: 2	Viewpoint direction: North-east	Approximate distance from site: 25m
Taken by: WH	Photograph date: December 2018	OS map elevation: Approx. 29.00m AOD (Survey data)



VP: 3	Viewpoint direction: South-east	Approximate distance from site: Adjacent
Taken by: WH	Photograph date: December 2018	OS map elevation: Approx. 28.60m AOD (Survey data)



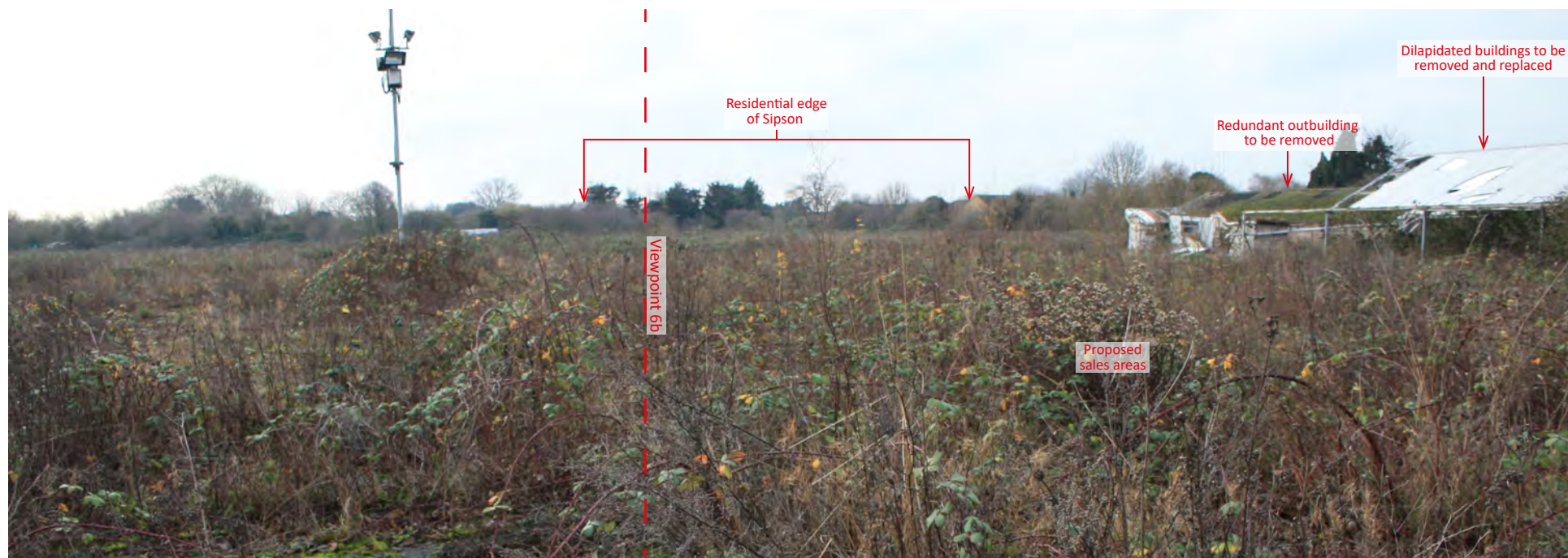
VP: 4a	Viewpoint direction: South-east	Approximate distance from site: Within
Taken by: WH	Photograph date: December 2018	OS map elevation: Approx. 28.50m AOD (Survey data)



VP: 4b	Viewpoint direction: South-east	Approximate distance from site: Within
Taken by: WH	Photograph date: December 2018	OS map elevation: Approx. 28.50m AOD (Survey data)



VP: 5	Viewpoint direction: South	Approximate distance from site: 70m
Taken by: WH	Photograph date: December 2018	OS map elevation: Between 25-30m AOD



VP: 6a	Viewpoint direction: South-west	Approximate distance from site: Within
Taken by: WH	Photograph date: December 2018	OS map elevation: Approx. 28.80m AOD (Survey data)



VP: 6b	Viewpoint direction: South-west	Approximate distance from site: Within
Taken by: WH	Photograph date: December 2018	OS map elevation: Approx. 28.80m AOD (Survey data)



VP: 7	Viewpoint direction: North-west	Approximate distance from site: 35m
Taken by: WH	Photograph date: December 2018	OS map elevation: Approx. 28.30m AOD (Survey data)



VP: 8	Viewpoint direction: North-west	Approximate distance from site: 260m
Taken by: WH	Photograph date: December 2018	OS map elevation: Approx. 40m AOD (From bridge over M4)



VP: 9	Viewpoint direction: East	Approximate distance from site: 400m
Taken by: WH	Photograph date: December 2018	OS map elevation: Between 25-30m AOD