

Landscape and Visual Technical Note

Land off the A363 White Horse Business Park, Trowbridge, Wiltshire

January 2022

Introduction

1. This Landscape and Visual Technical Note has been produced for Castlewood Property Ltd by a Chartered Landscape Architect at Turley Landscape and VIA. It accompanies the revisions to the outline planning application for the proposed development on Land off the A363 White Horse Development Park (Application reference: 20/03641/OUT). It has been prepared in response to consultation responses and landscape and visual issues identified through post submission conversations with Wiltshire Council.
2. This Technical Note should be read in conjunction with the Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (LVIA) prepared for the original submission. It should also be read in conjunction with the Design and Access Statement Addendum which includes the revised Parameter Plans and Illustrative Layout and the Landscape Strategy by Turley Design; the Ecology Technical Note by Nicholas Pearson Associates (NPA); and, the plans and Planning Statement submitted in support of the original planning application.
3. The Technical Note provides a summary of the revised Scheme Proposal, it then identifies the key consultation comments related to landscape and visual matters and describes how the revisions to the Scheme Proposal have responded to these comments. It then considers the findings of the submitted LVIA and summaries any changes to the conclusions of this assessment.

Summary of the revised Scheme Proposal

4. The revised Scheme Proposal provides an illustrative layout that incorporates 92 residential dwellings. Key changes to the Scheme Proposal are listed below:
 - The proposed 64 bed care home is now removed. This part of the Site would become green infrastructure used to contribute to the Site's biodiversity.
 - The set back of the developable area from the rear of existing residential properties to the east of Woodmarsh has increased.
 - The offset of the developable area from the central hedgerow has increased to ensure this is maintained within public open space as opposed to residential gardens.
 - A landscape strategy has been prepared to provide greater clarity on the potential treatment of landscape features and public open space and how these areas could deliver biodiversity net gain for the Site.

Consultation responses related to landscape and visual matters

5. The table below sets out the Consultation responses in relation to landscape and visual matters and provides consideration of these points and a summary on how the Scheme Proposal has been adapted to address the comments (where relevant).

Table 1.1: Review of relevant consultation responses

Consultation Response	Issue Raised	Landscape and Visual Response
Wiltshire Council Landscape Officer dated 15/10/2020	a) The allocated site H2.2 has come forward as two separate outline applications without an overarching strategy for the design of the new infrastructure.	a) An outline masterplan has been demonstrated within the DAS Addendum that combines both application sites to demonstrate a comprehensive masterplan and identifies how the overarching masterplan responds directly to Policy H2.2.
	b) The current sketch layout does not support the approach to retaining physical and visual separation, as set out in the North Bradley Neighbourhood Plan ¹ (NBNP) strictly enough.	b) The parameters of the Scheme Proposal have been carefully considered to ensure a sense of separation between North Bradley and the new development and Trowbridge is maintained. The developable area is concentrated to the north and east of the Site whilst incorporating drainage features on the lower lying northern edge of the Site. Built development is set back from Woodmarsh to ensure a sense of leaving Trowbridge and entering into North Bradley is maintained. The revised layout has set the developable area further back from existing residential properties on Woodmarsh with a separation zone of a minimum of c.58m and increasing to c.205m in parts.
	c) Concerns that the provision of woodland against the gardens of Woodmarsh would shut down the relationship of North Bradley and the perceived gap to the northeast.	c) The landscape strategy has been developed to provide greater clarity on the treatment of the gap between North Bradley and the Scheme Proposal. This establishes principles of a more open woodland structure that would vary in width and treatment along its length. The separation zone would include a mix of open grassland, woodland copse and woodland extension planting that would maintain privacy and security to rear garden boundaries of

¹ Paragraph 8.8 of the North Bradley Neighbourhood Plan states ‘...if the site could not be avoided (which the community preferred) then it should be reduced in size and development concentrated to the east and north, leaving as wide a landscape gap between the site and Trowbridge as possible. This was accepted and it was agreed that the LPA and the Parish Council should meet to discuss details. Wiltshire Council agreed to reduce the site in size from a level of 225 (proposed) to 175 homes.’

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		existing properties backing onto the Site whilst preserving an open aspect to views. The planting would strengthen the existing hedgerow, provide a species-rich habitat and filter resident's views of proposed built form through the cumulative presence of tree planting, without creating a dense screen.
	d) A joined-up masterplan approach to Site H2.2 with a separation gap to North Bradley that is appropriate and identifiable should be provided along with some agreed detail for the landscape strategy.	d) A Landscape Strategy plan and supporting Landscape Statement has been prepared and a combined masterplan is set out in the DAS Addendum.
Wiltshire Council Urban Design Officer dated ² 09.07.2020	a) The form of the developable area appears to be a direct response to underground water pipe constraint rather than an obvious regard for the concept of avoiding visual coalescence.	a) The location of development was informed at an early stage by an Outline Landscape and Visual Appraisal, along with other relevant constraints including drainage and the location of services. This included the identification of where visual separation is experienced and how this could be maintained. Critically, development has been set back from Woodmarsh and the roundabout with the A363 where a sense of leaving Trowbridge and arriving into North Bradley is experienced. Requirements for drainage pushed development back from the north eastern corner of the Site where Allocation H2.1 is proposed to extend the settlement edge. The northwest corner of the Site would contribute to biodiversity enhancements whilst preserving a green corridor that would visually separate the village of North Bradley from the area of proposed development. The submission LVIA provides viewpoint photography and an assessment of how the development will affect views experienced in the local area and the impact on the physical and perceived separation between Trowbridge and North Bradley.
	b) The central hedge does not appear to have been left with enough space alongside it to allow it to function as a	b) The illustrative layout has been amended to increase the width of the green corridor alongside the retained central hedgerow. This incorporates a positive development frontage

² Refer to DAS Addendum for detailed response on design matters

Consultation Response	Issue Raised	Landscape and Visual Response
	continuous 'corridor' (i.e. movement route. Development should probably be pulled back from the edge and allocated path shown along the corridor to secure this concept.	and grass verge to either side of the hedge with a minimum width of 6m.
North Bradley Parish Council dated 10.07.2020	a) The landscape assessment of the application has been uninformed by the NBNP, despite this being a key planning consideration. It is disappointing that the applicants seem unaware this policy (NBNP Policy 1) or the professional landscape study ('Landscape and Visual Setting Analysis Report') which underlies it. b) This may explain why so little attention has been paid to the visual and spatial impacts of the proposals on North Bradley. c) It also has not taken account of the Landscape and Visual Setting Analysis Report. The analysis given seems inadequate.	a) During the preparation of the Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (LVIA) due regard was given to both the NBNP and the Landscape and Visual Setting Analysis report. The NBNP is referred to in the summary of Local Planning Context. Relevant points have been drawn out and considered within the assessment of effects. The Site is not located within the Landscape Setting Gap and Policy 1 cannot apply to the Site as it is not within the designated area. b) The visual and spatial impacts of the proposals on North Bradley were assessed within the LVIA. This included assessment of the impact of the proposals on the following receptors: District Landscape Character Area (LCA) E3: North Bradley Rolling Clay Lowland; Local LCA: North Bradley Village, Local LCA: Trowbridge Lowland Farmland; Woodmarsh Farm Cottage and residential properties on the eastern side of Woodmarsh; pedestrians and motorists on Woodmarsh; pedestrians using the public footpath ref: NBRA7 to the southeast and Little Common; and, pedestrians, horse riders and motorists using Bridleway ref: NBRA3 / Axe and Cleaver Lane to the west. c) Consideration was given to the Landscape and Visual Setting Analysis report in the collation of baseline information on landscape and visual characteristics. However, as the conclusions of this report for land included within the Site conflicted with the adopted policy information for the Housing Allocation H2.2, and were not taken forward in the submission version of the NBNP, it was not considered relevant to include further analysis on this document. The Landscape and Visual Setting Analysis report included the application site within the

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		Landscape Setting Gap and located development adjacent to the existing settlement edge of North Bradley. This goes against guidance for Allocation H2.2 which states that to retain the visual separation of Trowbridge's urban area from North Bradley village proposals should be located to the north and east of the (allocation) site.
	d) The proposed gap between proposed development on the site and North Bradley is far too small. Although it is claimed that this is a 'green corridor' it is in fact very narrow. This may reflect the number of houses being proposed, which in our view is excessive.	d) The gap between the proposed development and North Bradley has been increased in the amended Scheme Proposal. It is now a minimum of c.58m from the developable area to the edge of the rear gardens of properties on Woodmarsh, extending up to c.200m where a new area of public open space, connected to North Bradley is incorporated. The rear gardens of existing adjacent properties in North Bradley, many of which are up to 30-40m long, would also increase the width of the proposed gap. In our opinion this could not be described as 'very narrow'. A landscape strategy has been developed to demonstrate how this landscape separation zone could be treated. This includes open woodland planting and woodland edge structure, wildflower meadows and individual trees.
	e) The impact on the properties along Woodmarsh will be significant and negative: the new homes are too close. The character of the current landscape around North Bradley village is of open fields, with hedges.	e) The residential properties would be set a minimum of c.58m away from the outer edge of rear gardens of the properties on Woodmarsh and would be separated by a landscape zone incorporating open woodland, wildflower meadows and public open space. This separation distance is significantly in excess of the 21m separation which is widely recognised as a recommended minimum separation distance for maintaining privacy and outlook between properties. It is identified in the LVIA that the views experienced by residents of properties on Woodmarsh would change with adverse effects at year 1 ranging from Medium (for properties with little vegetation within rear gardens) to Low (where mature vegetation filters views). By year 15, it was identified that the effects on views would reduce to vary

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		between Low and Negligible magnitude. This is due to the proposed planting, which would strengthen the existing landscape structure and contain views of built form. The Landscape Strategy that has been developed to support the revised submission demonstrates a wide area of informal open space and woodland that would preserve an open character to views whilst minimising the visual impact of proposed built form. It is recognised that there would be a change of outlook from these properties. However, changes to private views are not a planning consideration³ unless the development is likely to be so overbearing or dominating that they could result in unacceptable living conditions and harm the residential amenity of properties. Due to the separation distances between existing and proposed properties and the presence of existing and proposed vegetation in the intervening area, it is not considered this would be the case.
	f) Policy CP51 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy states that development should ‘protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character and must not have a harmful impact upon landscape character. Any negative impacts must be mitigated as far as possible through sensitive design and landscape measures.’ The Parish Council does not believe the current proposal goes anywhere near satisfying this policy.	f) It is acknowledged within the assessment provided in the LVIA (Section 7) that there would be adverse effects on local landscape character as a result of the proposed development. This is inevitable for a greenfield development. However, it is also identified that the Proposed Development would retain trees and hedgerows where possible, preserve ecological corridors and enhance the landscape structure with additional planting. Further details in relation to landscape proposals in order to ensure negative impacts are mitigated as far as possible would be secured at reserved matters stage. We are confident that the proposed development parameters would secure sufficient space for a strong landscape zone to be created between North Bradley and the proposed development area. The Landscape Strategy plan and supporting Landscape Statement provides greater clarity to this and describes how the existing landscape structure

³ Aldred’s Case in 1610 established in English law that views from private property cannot be protected

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	g) We would ask for the 2.5 storey homes proposed to be replaced with 2 storey. The applications Design and Access Statement (DAS) acknowledges that views of houses will be possible. This will completely change the rural outlook of these village properties	would be enhanced incorporating measures to result in biodiversity net gain with a positive 3.6% change in Habitat Units on the Site. g) The DAS identifies that ‘the majority of the proposal will be 2 storey, with key nodal points to be up to 2.5 storey’. It also states that ‘development along the green infrastructure edges (which includes the landscape zone adjacent to North Bradley) will more likely be two storey heights to respond to its open character’. This is considered an appropriate response to the surrounding context and would create visual interest to the street scene within the development itself. As described above, whilst there would be a change in outlook, measures have been incorporated to set the development in an attractive landscape framework to minimise the urbanising impact on views from local residents.

Conclusions of the LVIA

6. The conclusions of the LVIA recognised there are no landscape designations covering the Site and it is not considered to form part of a valued landscape. The Site forms part of an allocated area for residential development. The consultation response from the Landscape Officer at Wiltshire Council agreed that the site is ‘*an undesignated, unremarkable landscape and not considered to be part of a valued landscape in the context of paragraph 170 of the NPPF*’.
7. The conclusions of the LVIA identified that the Scheme Proposal would introduce residential development into an area of rural landscape surrounding Trowbridge, changing the character of the landscape within the Application Site and some local views. However, effects on the wider landscape and more distant views would be limited. The proposed tree and hedgerow planting and new areas of open space would improve the recreational value of the landscape and enhance parts of the landscape structure. The identified long terms effects on landscape character ranged from Medium-Low Adverse to Negligible and the long term effects on visual receptors ranged from Medium-Low Adverse to Negligible.
8. The conclusions of the LVIA and previously identified range of effects would remain valid for the revised Scheme Proposals. Due to the removal of the proposed care home and refinements to the layout, there would be some localised changes to views and landscape features. This would include views experienced by road users and pedestrians on Woodmarsh and Bradley Road where the influence of built form would decrease due to the removal of the care home. This is considered a positive change, due to the resultant increased space for ecological and landscape

enhancements including the potential provision of a community orchard to the north of the Site. The break between proposed built form and North Bradley would increase, reinforcing the sense of separation between the settlement areas in accordance with aspirations for allocation H2.2. The additional space for green infrastructure would also enable the achievement of on Site biodiversity net gain. This includes measures to remove private gardens from dark corridors and provide 15m wide dark corridors throughout the Site.

9. The consultation response from the Landscape Officer at Wiltshire recognised that *‘as an allocated housing site, the Council accepts that there will be a permanent change in character from rural to urban to meet local needs’*.
10. It went on to say that *‘overall I agree with the judgements and conclusions of the LVA. I do consider that the assessment is robust and appropriate to inform a planning decision. The predicted landscape and visual effects will be experienced at a local level on the site and its immediate environs and are not considered to have any significant adverse residual effects. The current proposal retains and enhances the existing vegetation structure where possible and will provide a new quantum of green infrastructure that will be accessible to residents’*.
11. It is considered that the revised Scheme Proposals and the additional clarity that has been provided through the preparation of the landscape strategy provides greater assurance on the proposed retention and enhancements to the landscape structure. It also reinforces the perceived separation between the proposed development and the edge of North Bradley and demonstrates that net gain in biodiversity can be achieved on Site. The arrangement of built form within the Site has been designed to minimise effects on the setting of North Bradley and build on the existing landscape structure to preserve key characteristics of the landscape and important ecological corridors. The revised Scheme Proposals would reinforce this approach.

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