5 Proposed Development

Plan 4: Site Layout (LB284_D01e (sheet 1 of 3) - See Appendix 1 for full set of pans showing wider site operations and management.



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6 Implications of Development

Landscape and Visual Effects

6.1 Having identified the landscape and visual context, including an identification of the key characteristics, features and extent and composition of views, this section provides a summary of the landscape and visual effects of the proposed development.

6.2 This section will not assess the significance of landscape and visual effects, but will provide an indication of the nature of change associated with the proposals. This is based upon the development parameters as illustrated in **Appendix 1**, and the associated Site Layout (**Plan 4**) found in **Section 5**.

Landscape Effects

6.3 The Porton Down Chalk Downland Landscape Character Area sits within the 'Chalkland Downs' landscape character type. The Salisbury District Landscape Character Assessment document presents a landscape strategy for development within the LCA, which includes the following relevant points:

- *"Conserve the network of remaining hedgerows and restore where possible, using locally appropriate species;*
- *Conserve open views into the Bourne Valley and across adjacent Chalk Downland Landscape Character Areas;*
- *Seek active management and scrub removal whenever possible;*
- *Conserve the relatively strong sense of tranquillity and predominantly rural character throughout;*
- *Discourage unsympathetic ribbon development and associated planting (such as Leylandii hedges);*
- *Seek to screen visually harsh urban edges; and*
- *Ensure that any potential new development responds to existing settlement scale and respects local vernacular building materials".*

6.4 On site hedgerows have become overgrown and fragmented, development proposals seek to conserve and restore these characteristic features.

6.5 The baseline studies have identified that there is a prominent issue with scrub colonisation which by way of development will be removed and land actively managed and restored to grassland. The site is small in scale and seeks to conserve tranquillity and maintain the rural character of the wider landscape through the location of and screening of development.

6.6 All proposed planting is native and seen within the locality.

6.7 The introduction of development will reduce the openness of the field. However, the placement of units is partially in place of existing tall scrub. Additionally, large areas of scrub will be removed within the wider field parcel and returned to grassland, opening up the wider field parcel in line with the host landscape character area.

6.8 All proposed planting is native and in keeping with the local character of the site. Once mature, proposed vegetation will screen urbanising features within the site and the surrounding landscape from visual receptors on Byway ~~7~~259.

Landscape Sensitivity

6.9 To understand the nature and extent of effects on the landscape, it is necessary to establish the sensitivity of the site which will be receiving the proposed development, and the associated mitigation measures included as part of the scheme.

6.10 As set out in GVLIA3, Landscape Sensitivity is a combination of judgements of value and susceptibility to a specific type of change or development proposed.

Landscape Value

6.11 Landscape value is defined by GLVIA3 as being *"The relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society. A landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a variety of reasons."*

6.12 Landscape value can be assessed using the factors as set-out at Box 5.1 of GLVIA3. This is an approach that is widely used and has been judged as an acceptable approach. The factors are as follows:

- 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;
- Scenic Quality - The term used to describe landscapes which appeal primarily to the senses (primarily but not wholly the visual senses);
- Rarity - The presence of rare features and elements in the landscape or the presence of a rare Landscape Character Type;
- Representativeness - Whether the landscape contains a particular character, and/or features and elements, which are considered particularly important examples;
- Conservation Interests - The presence of features of wildlife, earth science or archaeological or historical and cultural interest can add to the value of a landscape as well as having value in their own right;
- Recreation 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; and
- Associations - Some landscapes are associated with particular people, such as artists or writers, or events in history that contribute to perceptions of natural beauty of the area.

Landscape Quality

6.13 The development site and wider agricultural field exhibit several landscape features consistent with the host character area (Porton Down Chalk Down). However, features are in a poor and declining condition. Hedgerows have become overgrown and fragmented. Scrub has been left to colonise the site and wider field parcel freely. Individual trees are of low-quality (Category C) but for a single group found on the wider fields northern boundary. Good-quality grassland can be found across the site but risks further colonisation of scrub. The quality of the landscape is considered poor.

Scenic Quality

6.14 The development site is considered to be of ordinary scenic quality. Contributions to the scenic quality of the area are limited by the sites limited visibility in identified views and the lack of positive contribution to the local landscape character. The wider field parcel has potential to enhance the character of the site and wider landscape through scrub clearance and grassland enhancement.

Rarity and Representativeness

6.15 The site has no rare landscape features. Representations of the wider landscape while present are limited. The site does not feature within key views and forms the approach to Lopcombe Corner, urbanised by neighbouring residential and commercial development.

6.16 Landscape features within the site's boundaries make limited contribution to the local character area. Rarity and Representativeness is considered ordinary.

Conservation Interests

6.17 The site and wider field parcel features a number of habitats beneficial to wildlife, including a mixed plantation woodland, dense/continuous/scattered scrub, semi-improved grassland and broadleaved trees. The development site is not considered to feature any conservation interests above an ordinary value.

Recreational Value

6.18 The site features no Public Rights of Way and is on private land.

Perceptual Aspects

6.19 The site is visible from the Byway to the north of the wider field parcel and from the immediate vicinity along Stockbridge Road. From both aspects the site is seen within the context of built development and has limited intervisibility with the wider countryside beyond. Tranquillity within the site is affected by vehicles travelling on Stockbridge Road (A30), neighbouring agricultural and commercial activities and operations within the MOD site to the north-west. The site is overgrown and unmanaged, and where viewed within the wider landscape, is considered uncharacteristic of the host landscape character area. The site is considered to be of a poor perceptual value.

Associations

6.20 There are no known associations which would indicate a strong or important link between the site and the local landscape in terms of historic or current appreciation.

Summary

6.21 The assessment has identified the site as being of an ordinary to poor value. Where the site exhibits key qualities of the local character, they are in a poor and declining condition.

Landscape Susceptibility

6.22 GLVIA3 defines susceptibility to change as *"... the ability of the landscape receptor... to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and / or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies"* (GLVIA3, paragraph 5.40, pages 88 and 89).

6.23 The susceptibility of the landscape needs to be determined for the specific proposals. This is important, as it allows the assessment to take account of the local context and how the proposed development fits within it.

6.24 In relation to the susceptibility, based on experience and professional opinion, including that derived from various workshops coordinated by the Landscape Institute on GLVIA3, the levels of susceptibility for the proposed development have been described as being:

- **High Susceptibility** - The landscape is such that changes in terms of the development proposed would be entirely at odds with the character of the local area, related to matters including pattern, grain, use, scale and mass;
- **Medium Susceptibility** - The proposed development has a degree of consistency with the existing scale, pattern, grain, land use of the prevailing character, although mitigation may be appropriate to enhance assimilation; and
- **Low Susceptibility** - The development proposed is entirely consistent with the character of the local area, related to matters including pattern, grain, use, scale and mass.

6.25 The site is located within open countryside on agricultural land found between commercial, residential and agricultural land uses. The backdrop of these land uses places the site within a peri-urban landscape on the approach to Lopcombe Corner.

6.26 The presence of existing built form adjacent to the site includes associated security fencing and overhead services, commercial signage and a bus stop on the site urbanises the site and the immediate context further

6.27 The proposals comprise four traveller pitches with a play area, access road, hedgerow and tree planting, as well as pedestrian access to a bus stop.

6.28 New landscaping along the northern, southern and western site boundaries will increase characteristic landscape features of hedgerows with hedgerow trees, and filter views of the proposed units.

6.29 Additional planting will also, (over time) assist with providing a softer edge and transition to the wider landscape, and will help to filter views of the existing neighbouring development from the PRoW to the north of the site. The proposals are consistent with the character of the local area and proportionally smaller in scale, land use and mass of the adjacent developments. For the above factors, the landscape has a '**Medium**' susceptibility to receive development.

Nature of Change

6.30 It is accepted that there will be a change to the nature of the site. However, where viewed, built development will be seen within the context of neighbouring development.

6.31 The site is overgrown, colonised by scrub and in a declining condition. Key landscape features would be restored and enhanced by way of development.

6.32 The proposed landscape treatments to the development site and the wider field parcel seeks to

enhance the landscape character of the area whilst mitigating negative impacts through the introduction of further built form to the locality.

Existing boundary vegetation

6.33 The existing boundary planting found within the site and the wider field parcel shall be retained and enhanced, supplemented with additional native planting which will be characteristic of the published landscape character. Hedgerows will be gapped up and green infrastructure links created.

Internal Planting

6.34 The internal areas will receive a carefully considered landscape scheme with additional native trees and a diverse native structure created. Further planting will be incorporated to the north of the development area to filter views from identified visual receptors.

Location of the proposed pitches.

6.35 The proposed pitches have been set back from Stockbridge Road and the boundaries of the wider field parcel to allow for a landscape buffer, protecting both the amenity of neighbouring residents and receptors on the local PRoW. The proposed development has a low density with large areas of open space, and is consistent with the local development pattern within the locality.

Relationship of the development to the existing settlement

6.36 The development of the site will be in keeping with the local settlement pattern and grain given its location and close proximity to neighbouring development and Lopcombe Corner. The character of Stockbridge Road will be retained and enhanced, transient users will not perceive the proposed development once boundary vegetation matures and hedgerows along Stockbridge Road will be actively managed.

6.37 The proposed additional landscaping along the northern boundary will assist in providing a soft transition to the wider landscape and enhance the landscape character of both the wider site and the site itself.

Visual Implications

Visual Context

6.38 As set out in **Section 4** of this report, views of the site are localised and limited by neighbouring development, vegetation and topography.

Visual Receptors

6.39 The visual receptors identified within the area and those verified in the field as having a change in their view are assessed below.

6.40 These receptors represent people who will experience a change in their views due to the implementation of the proposals, and are likely to include the following:

- Recreational users of PRoW Byway 7259 (**Photoviewpoint 3, 4 and 5**);
- Transient users of Stockbridge Road and the pedestrians using the Bus Stop on the southern extent of the site (**Photoviewpoints 1 and 2**); and
- Residents and workers at properties on Stockbridge Road (**Photoviewpoints 1 and 2**).

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

6.41 The visual receptors identified within the study area and verified within the field as having a change in their view and sensitivity are assessed below. These receptors represent people who will experience a change in their view due to the implementation of the proposals.

6.42 Users of recreational footpaths will have a higher sensitivity to change due to using footpaths for recreational purposes and for enjoyment of the countryside. Local residential receptors will also have a higher sensitivity to change due to their proximity to the development. Transient users have a lower sensitivity to change due to concentrating on the road ahead and travelling at speed.

Recreational users of PRoW Byway 7259 (Photoviewpoint 3, 4 and 5)

6.43 Receptors using Byway 7259 will experience intermittent changes to views over small sections of the PRoW. Views of the site are curtailed or heavily filtered along much of the route. Two instances were recorded with views to the site, which in both cases were partially filtered by intervening vegetation (Photoviewpoint 3 and 4). Whilst the development will introduce built form to views from this receptor, proposed tree and hedgerow planting will heavily filter views once mature, and where still available will be seen within the context of surrounding development.

Transient users of Stockbridge Road and the pedestrians using the Bus Stop on the southern extent of the site (Photoviewpoints 1 and 2)

6.44 Receptors travelling at speed along Stockbridge Road will experience negligible changes to their view as additional planting is introduced behind the enhanced hedgerow flanking the road. The new access point will be visible, however, the proposed units will be entirely screened by existing vegetation. The character of the road will be enhanced through active management of the existing hedgerow and introduction of trees consistent with Stockbridge Road.

Residents and workers of properties on Stockbridge Road

6.45 Residents living along Stockbridge Road will have limited views of the site. Development where visible from the west will be seen in the context of existing built form to the south and east of the site. The offset of development from Stockbridge Road will ensure views to development from the south are unavailable. Where seen from residential properties to the east, the site will appear below the residents view line with neighbouring land sitting approximately 10m above that of the development site. The low-level nature of caravans set behind existing mature trees will minimise any negative impacts.

Summary

6.46 Having assessed the landscape and visual effects imposed upon the site, local landscape and visual receptors, it has been found that the site can accommodate the proposed changes without detrimental effect. In contrary, the development would allow for the restoration and enhancement of much of the wider field parcel, the site itself and the local character.

6.47 Adverse impacts involve introducing built form into

greenfield land, however, the built proposals would not be perceptible beyond the immediate landscape and even then limited and highly localised.

6.48 There are several beneficial effects that when put within the balance are considered a positive outcome for both landscape and visual amenity.

6.49 New, enhanced and restored hedgerows upon both the development site and wider field parcel seek to restore key characteristic features.

6.50 The removal of scrub will open up the wider field parcel and part of the development site, returning it to grassland in line with the local character area.

6.51 Additional tree and hedgerow planting combine with existing landscape features to mitigate visibility of development proposals.

6.52 Users of the local PRoW will experience negligible adverse effects once proposed vegetation has matured and beneficial effects where the land use of the wider site has been returned back to grassland in keeping with local character.

6.53 For users of Stockbridge Road, the proposals would have a negligible effect along approach and boundary but for the access point visible.

6.54 The development of the site will not introduce any uncharacteristic features into the landscape. Due to its visual containment, consistent land use and location amongst existing development whilst enhancing the local character of the area.

7 Summary and Conclusion

7.1 When considering the landscape and visual context of development it is important to recognise that any change will result in landscape and visual implications.

7.2 The extent of these implications should be considered within the local character and context of the proposals and how they relate to their surroundings. In addition, the implications need to be put in the planning balance with all other economic, social and environmental implications of the development.

7.3 The site is not subject to any landscape designations indicating that development should not be restricted, as set out within the NPPF.

7.4 The development accords with the relevant planning policies found within the adopted Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan through the following:

- The natural and built environment has been protected by limiting the development footprint, enhancing existing landscape features and offsetting development from neighbouring residential properties (Core Policy 51);
- Proposed planting creates and enhances green infrastructure connections with the introduction of native species in keeping with the local landscape character. New GI links have been developed with the introduction of hedgerows and hedgerow trees to site boundaries and infilling of existing fragmented hedgerows. New planting and active management of existing planting and landscape features seeks to restore and enhance the inherent landscape character of the site in line with the host landscape character area and Special Landscape Area (Core Policy 52, Policy C3, WVDS - Character);
- Offset of development from Stockbridge Road behind existing vegetation screens the development from the carriageway, maintaining the character of the road and approach to Lopcombe Corner (WVDS Environment);
- The development site utilises land with a high-degree of visual enclosure within a settled agricultural area. The development is subservient to the existing scale, mass and grain of neighbouring development, and does not adversely effect the perceived form, character or setting of the surrounding developed landscape. The site doesn't form part of any wider landscape views or encroach into the wider countryside any further than neighbouring development (WVDS - Size of Development); and
- The proposed layout reflects the neighbouring pattern of local development, local distinctiveness and historic character of the area through layout and design. The developments boundary treatments seek to create a soft edge to the development and does not introduce built form into the perceived open countryside. The development proposal seeks to enhance and restore key landscape features and incorporates visual mitigation into the development where appropriate. (Policy C3).

7.5 Overall the proposals accord with the majority of policy and guidance recommendations, and where guidelines cannot be satisfied in full, the scheme will need to be considered as part of the overall planning balance.

7.6 The site itself has some characteristic features in line with the host LCA, however, they are in a degraded and declining condition. The encroachment of scrub, poor condition of trees and fragmented hedgerows play a poor contribution to the value of the site and wider field parcel. The site does not have qualities or characteristics which would indicate that it is of more than a local ordinary value. Any restoration and enhancement of existing landscape features will be beneficial to the site, wider field parcel and local landscape. The transition of the site and wider field parcel back to open grassland would be seen as a benefit and enhancement to the character of the host LCA.

7.7 The site is located between existing settlement with overlooking residential properties. The parcel of land in which the site sits is seen as a distinct piece of land and is physically separated from the wider landscape to the north. It's character is one of a settled agricultural landscape, and it is well related to neighbouring development in the immediate vicinity and wider afield through on-site transport links (bus stop).

7.8 The site currently shares limited characteristics with the wider Chalkland Down landscape character area and the proposed development will not be perceived to extend into the wider agricultural countryside. The proposed mitigation will assist in integrating the scheme into both the local landscape and the wider character area.

7.9 Removal of scrub and reinstatement of grassland along with gapping up and management of existing hedgerows, introduction of new hedgerows, diverse native scrub and trees, will increase characteristic landscape features and aid in filtering the views from local visual receptors.

7.10 Vegetated boundaries along the extent of the wider field will be gapped up and managed, increasing landscape connectivity and ecological links.

7.11 Although recreational users of ByWay 7259 will experience change. The location of development, proposed and enhanced planting will soften views of both the new proposals and existing neighbouring development. Over time this will enhance the visual amenity of Byway users from the current baseline, once vegetation has matured. Development proposals will likely be completely screened over a period of 15 years.

7.12 The development would be characteristic, seen in context with existing residential development and in close proximity to an existing caravan park (320m north-west), and of a scale, massing and design which will provide a good contextual fit. The development would be visually subservient to the surrounding development. The nature of the views, composition, features and elements within them would remain largely unaltered.

7.13 In summary, the proposals will not be detrimental to landscape character and visual amenity, will be in keeping with local built form and development pattern, and will not introduce any uncharacteristic features into the landscape. The development seeks to enhance landscape and ecological features of the site and wider field parcel, delivering key benefits to the local landscape character. Through selective native planting and positioning of units, adverse visual impacts have been mitigated, there will be no significant impact on the local landscape character nor visual receptors. Following a period of 15 years, landscape and visual impacts rising from the proposed development shall be reduced to negligible in all instances and therefore the development proposals are assessed as acceptable in landscape and visual terms.

Appendix 1 - LB284/P01e Site Layout (sheets 1-3)



- Application Boundary
- Land Under Ownership
- Removed Vegetation
- Retained Vegetation
- Retained Tree with RPA
- Proposed Tree with 25 year projected canopy
- Proposed Hedgerow
- Grassland
  Restored and enhanced through collection and redistribution of Hay on site. Hay to be cut from site and transferred within 12 hours to disturbed areas and areas of removed scrub
- Amenity Grass (turf)
- Native Structure Planting
- Gravel Road Surface
  Vehicular Geo-cell Granular Fill
  Colour: Buff
- PCC Paving
  Size 450x450
  Colour - Buff
- Access Road
  Bitumen Macadam
- Directional Proximity Lighting Post
- Treatment Plant Run
- Visibility Splay
- Timber post and rail fence (x3 rails)
- Residential Gate
  Timber double leaf field gate
- Entrance Gate
  Timber double leaf field gate

Rev	Comment	Date
e	Red Line Amendment	22.02.23
d	Planting Enhancement to Road	25.01.23
c	Final Issue	12.01.23
b	Final Layout	04.01.23
a	Team Comments	23.08.22

N

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Client:

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Project Title:

Land near Touchwood, Stockbridge Road, Lopcombe Corner, SP5 1BW

Drawing Title:

Site Layout
(Sheet 1 of 3)

Date: 04 April 2022
Drawing Number: LB284_D01
Scale: 1:250 at A1
Status: Final

Drawn By: AL
Checked by: DB
Revision: E
Use: Planning