

**Land at White Street,
West Lavington, Wiltshire**

**Landscape and Visual Appraisal
(LVA)**

March 2026

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Macgregor Smith Ltd, Landscape Architects, were appointed by CG Fry to provide a landscape and visual appraisal of the proposals for the land off White Street, West Lavington, Wiltshire. Alongside this study, the practice has also contributed to the project by providing landscape design proposals for the current Planning Application.
- 1.2. This report should be read in conjunction with our separate document, **Landscape and Visual Appraisal Figures** which provide the illustrative figures referenced in the text as well as the Appendices at the end of this document.
- 1.3. The site location and extents are illustrated on **Figures 1.1 and 1.2**.
- 1.4. The development scheme has evolved through collaboration with various consultants, including specialists in Ecology and Arboriculture, alongside architectural site planning, as well as drainage, civil, and transportation engineering. The early consideration of both environmental and policy factors has helped ensure the proposals for the site have been developed in a coordinated and a holistic way, with respect to the environment.
- 1.5. This report is set out as a Non-EIA-Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment ¹. The study considers two distinct, but inter-linked components of the landscape as follows:
 - **Landscape**; the physical fabric, character, perceptual characteristics and recreational, natural and cultural interest of the site and surrounding area, and
 - **Views and visual amenity**; visibility towards the site as perceived from identified representative external viewpoints.
- 1.6. The assessment summarises the existing condition of the landscape and relevant planning designations and then provides assessment of the likely impacts on the landscape resource and visual amenity. The assessment is undertaken in accordance with current best practice: 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', published by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, Third Edition, 2013 (along with the subsequent supporting guidance from the LI in LITGN-2024-01). Further explanation of the methodology is provided in Appendix 4).
- 1.7. For this study, the approach taken, is to set out the site context by way of introduction; followed by a description of the physical landscape, including topography, vegetation cover. The character assessment that follows, then draws on the published wider area assessments before providing a more localised character analysis. The use of the site for public access or recreation and any specific aspects of inherent interest or value are also noted.
- 1.8. The existing condition (baseline) assessment then draws the different layers together into a summary evaluation of the landscape, and the sensitivity that would be attached to each aspect. Sensitivity is considered as the likely importance or value of that aspect in combination with its susceptibility to the type of change that may be expected. This may

¹ A Non-EIA-LVia is a less formal process than an ES-LVIA, which are often required for large or developments in highly sensitive settings where 'significant' effects may be expected these are often provided as part of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), while an LVia, or LVA, is less formal and detailed the same basic analysis is followed and the same range of levels of impact effect are applied.

be either a particular vulnerability to residential development as an impact on that landscape or a capacity to accept certain types of change. While often with landscape features impacts may be related to a direct loss, aspects of landscape character may be more simply influenced by change.

- 1.9. The impact assessment is based on the scheme developed after the initial review of potential effects and with the intended landscape and other mitigation measures in place as part of the proposals put forward. The effects are considered during the construction period, at completion and again at 15 years later once new landscape is established. For mitigation assessments planting is presumed to be in the order of 6 m in height at 15 years.
- 1.10. The site was first visited in the summer of 2024, then again in the winter of early 2026, with all the key views photographed at that time. The weather was bright and clear on the first visit, and overcast for the more recent visit, yet visibility was moderate.
- 1.11. Separate ecology and arboriculture surveys are also included within the application submission.

2. LANDSCAPE RELATED POLICIES

2.1. The development proposals come forward within a framework of national and local policy guidance. These are led at National Level with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This includes explanations on the presumption of support for and requirements of sustainable development. The NPPF highlights (among other topics);

- the importance of making efficient use of land,
- safeguarding and improving the environment
- ensuring safe and healthy living conditions
- the objectives for achieving well designed places

2.2. The importance of trees within urban areas or new developments is specifically noted with reference to well designed places. It is noted that planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are 'tree-lined' and opportunities taken to incorporate trees elsewhere within developments.

2.3. Section 15 of the NPPF relates to conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Paragraph 187 confirms 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); **[Emphasis added]**
- 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;" **[Emphasis added]**
- c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;

[Other clauses d, e and f relate to other aspects less landscape related].

2.4. Paragraph 188 continues to confirm:

"Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; **take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure**; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries." **[Emphasis added]**

2.5. The hierarchy of designations is referred to within para 189 with:

"Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of

wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.”

- 2.6. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act of 2023 placed a new duty on ‘relevant authorities requiring them to seek to further the purposes of the designated landscape (the purpose being conserving and enhancing natural beauty). This extends to decisions that may affect outside of the designated area placing greater emphasis on the settings of the National Landscape Areas.
- 2.7. The term valued landscapes from Para 187 is not defined within the NPPF. A number of planning decisions and appeals have generated some precedents, which have indicated an expectation that areas should have some clearly sufficient ‘demonstrable physical attributes’ to take it beyond ‘ordinary landscape’.
- 2.8. The application site is not located within, but is close to an area of National Landscape (see **Figure 1.3**). As part of this assessment the baseline site appraisal is drawn together into an ‘Evaluation’ summary in which the value of the site relative to the NPPF term ‘**valued landscape**’ is considered (the site is not noted as a valued landscape).²

² It is noted that the above references relate to the current NPPF (published in December 2024) and that a new Draft NPPF has been published in December 2025. The new draft does not use the term Valued Landscape or any obvious equivalent replacement for the term. The new Draft confirms, under policy NI that ‘Development Plans should safeguard and enhance the natural environment and reflect the wider benefits from natural capital....’. The policy continues with points that suggest such plans should ‘Set out the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated site and areas of importance for their landscape....’.

As noted in paragraph 3.3 below, the site falls within an extensive tract of land designated some time ago within the Kennet Local Plan as a Special Landscape. This area covers an extensive tract between the two National Landscape areas and is a type of landscape protection that previous versions of national planning guidance have discouraged in preference to understanding the contribution landscape character makes to local landscapes. The broad nature of this designation does not match the more focused higher-level interest that would be expected of a Valued Landscape.

The Draft NPPF includes reference to:

- the need for development plans to ‘Identify opportunities for the conservation, enhancement and recovery of landscapes, [N1 b], to set out standards for green infrastructure provision [N1 d],
- The objective for development proposals to ‘contribute positively to the natural environment and support nature’s recovery’ with development proposals, considering the environmental quality of land including habitats, landscape character and the natural beauty of the countryside and identify opportunities for those qualities to be conserved or enhanced’ [N2 a], and Conserve and enhance natural features of visual, historic or nature conservation value (such as established trees and hedgerows) wherever possible, and use appropriate landscaping to help create a well-designed place and integrated development into its surroundings [N2 d].

As with the current NPPF the Draft reiterates the intention that the benefits of trees can provide should be recognised with the aim for new streets to be tree-lined (unless there are strong reasons why this would be inappropriate in specific streets and incorporate trees in other suitable locations, such as in parks and through the provision of community orchards [N3 a].

As is set out within the following sections of this LVA all these considerations have been applied through the master planning and landscape design and the ecological mitigation measures for this application. This LVA details the degree to which the physical landscape features, the landscape character and the provision of Green Infrastructure has been addressed within the submitted proposals.

2.9. At a county level, the national guidance is reflected primarily in The Wiltshire Core Strategy. This development plan aims to meet the needs of Wiltshire's communities in both economic and housing contexts, whilst balancing the needs to protect the environment. The Wiltshire Core Strategy provides up-to-date strategic planning policy for Wiltshire and covers the period up to 2026. Key sections of The Wiltshire Core Strategy applicable to the landscape setting of the development site include:

- **Core Policy 51: Landscape**
- **Core Policy 52: Green Infrastructure**

2.10. Core Policy 51 seeks "to protect, conserve and enhance Wiltshire's distinctive landscape character. The term 'landscape' here is used to refer to the built, historic and natural environment in urban, peri-urban and rural areas". In addressing Core Policy 51 for the site at West Lavington, the relevant Landscape Character documents have also been referenced when assessing the landscape setting.

2.11. Core Policy 52 aims to ensure development retains and enhances existing green infrastructure, provides open green space in accordance with Wiltshire Open Space Standards, and improve linkages between the natural and historic landscapes of the county.

2.12. At a local site level, the site's immediate context is referenced within the West Lavington Neighbourhood Plan, and in particular Character Area K – "Church and Environs". The character appraisal highlights the importance of the public rights of way running parallel to the High Street, as well as access to and from Strawberry Hill and its associated views.

2.13. The site is not allocated within the West Lavington Neighbourhood plan, and sits outside of the settlement boundary, however these issues have been addressed further within the Planning Consultants' report, as part of this application.

3. SITE CONTEXT AND DESIGNATIONS

- 3.1. West Lavington is located some 6 miles (10 Km) to the south of Devizes. The village is part of a collection of village settlements that extend along the spring line on the north side of the Salisbury Plain, comprising of Market Lavington, Littleton Panell and West Lavington. This pattern of settlements can be found in **Figure 1.4**.
- 3.2. The site and village are located outside of the two National Landscape areas (formally AONB's) of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs and the North Wessex Downs, see **Figure 1.1**.
- 3.3. The general area is attractive countryside and falls within a Special Landscape Area (SLA): retained as a saved policy in the local plan (some former district authorities within the now unitary authority of Wiltshire retained their local SLA designations). This area protects an extensive tract of landscape that sits between the two downland National Landscape areas within the county. The area extends from the northern side of the village areas across the Salisbury Plain area including much of the military training grounds, but excluding larger built up areas such as the Lavingtons, Larkhall and Amesbury.
- 3.4. The village is located on gently sloping land on the northern side of the higher downland hills of Salisbury Plain. The line of the village follows one side of a small stream valley (Semington Brook) heading north from the plain. The topography of the wider area is illustrated in **Figure 1.5**.
- 3.5. The village is mostly centred along the A360 that links Devizes with the A303, passing close to Stonehenge and on to Salisbury.
- 3.6. In the southern half of the village, the A360 is formed of Church Street, which winds around a cluster of older buildings and lanes centred on the All Saints Church (Grade I listed) before passing the West Lavington Manor (Grade II). This area is characterised by hedge lined streets, tall boundary walls and mature tree canopies. The Manor presents an imposing high stone wall and impressive formal gateway as a clearly significant historic building / group (all Grade II).
- 3.7. North of West Lavington Manor, Church Street adjoins the High Street where the main road frontage is a mix of historic dwellings and more modern houses with occasional small estate developments and cul-de-sacs. Sections of the street feel quite narrow relative to the main road traffic passing through. Many of the older properties are built up against the back of footway with no front gardens; typical of earlier village development.
- 3.8. A crossroads at the centre of the Village links eastwards to Market Lavington, the larger part of the combined settlements, and west towards Earlstoke and the town of Westbury.
- 3.9. Most of the village has Conservation Area (CA) status and the Local Planning Authority CA Statement confirms the special qualities that make up the architectural and historic character (January 2003). The site falls outside of the CA extents, as illustrated in **Figure 1.11**.
- 3.10. The village includes one secondary and two primary schools, the former having playing fields that adjoin the north-west corner of the appraisal site.

4. WIDER LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

National Character Assessments

- 4.1. The Natural England National Character Area profile shows West Lavington as being located within Character Area 117 'Avon Vales', however the village falls closely near the boundary to the Salisbury Plain and West Wiltshire Downs Character Area.
- 4.2. 'Avon Vales' is described as an undulating, low-lying landscape of mixed, predominantly pastoral agriculture and small limestone-built towns, cut by the (Bristol) River Avon and its tributaries, and surrounded to the west, south and east by higher land. Woodlands lie on the steeper slopes and by watercourses, and in a few other areas within a structured farmland of medium to large fields and now straggly hedgerows. It is more than 80 per cent agricultural (both arable and pasture, with some localised nurseries and market gardening) and less than 10 per cent urban, but from the late 20th century onwards it has been subject to much development.
- 4.3. It is noted this area can be easily overlooked, surrounded as it is by the high-quality designated landscape of Cotswolds National Landscape, and the North Wessex Downs National Landscape, but it has a restful and undramatic charm of its own.
- 4.4. The NCA assessment describes a number of key characteristics of this area which include:
 - An undulating clay vale with a mix of arable and pasture.
 - Small and medium-sized fields with mostly hedgerow boundaries with few hedgerow trees, varying in shape from irregular piecemeal enclosure to rectilinear planned enclosure.
 - Numerous low ridges with local views over towns and villages.
 - Wide River Avon corridor, with an ancient pattern of flood meadows and closely associated settlements and more recent development.
 - Transport corridors along roads and watercourses, heavily influential on all development in the NCA.
 - Large historic parks and mansions, often established from former monastic establishments.
 - Attractive stone-built centres to market towns that reflect the former agricultural productivity and wealth of the area.
 - Wide views across whole area from higher areas of surrounding chalk downs.

Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment

- 4.5. At the County level, the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment was published in 2005. This identified 16 landscape types across the county, each of which has a distinct and relatively homogenous character with similar physical and cultural attributes including geology, landform, land cover, biodiversity and historical evolution.
- 4.6. The landscape types have been further sub-divided into component landscape character areas. West Lavington lies within character area 15A, 'Greensand Vale'. See **Figure 1.6**.

4.7. This landscape type is identified as having the following characteristics:

- An undulating clay vale with a mix of arable and pasture.
- Small and medium-sized fields with mostly hedgerow boundaries with few hedgerow trees, varying in shape from irregular piecemeal enclosure to rectilinear planned enclosure.
- Numerous low ridges with local views over towns and villages.
- Wide River Avon corridor, with an ancient pattern of flood meadows and closely associated settlements and more recent development.
- Transport corridors along roads and watercourses, heavily influential on all development in the NCA.
- Large historic parks and mansions, often established from former monastic establishments.
- Attractive stone-built centres to market towns that reflect the former agricultural productivity and wealth of the area.
- Wide views across whole area from higher areas of surrounding chalk downs.

4.8. The following broad management objectives are set down:

- Retain and manage areas of permanent pasture, wet grassland and meadows within the vale floor.
- Introduce new tree planting along watercourses using typical riparian species such as alder and willow.
- Encourage repair, replanting and extension of the hedgerow network, improved maintenance of the existing hedgerows
- Restore hedgerow treescape by nurturing new hedgerow trees.
- Restore and maintain traditional features of the Kennet and Avon canal landscape such as locks, bridges and other structures and retain tranquil quality of the canal corridor.
- Monitor road engineering to safeguard the rural character of the lanes.
- Consider developing guidance for built development to ensure both future construction and changes to existing buildings

4.9. The analysis provided above fits with that of the site and other areas around the village (as is the often case, smaller scale field patterns are seen around the other edges of the village). The wider fields in the immediate vicinity of the site are more open and would fall within the description of more open arable or mixed farmland.

4.10. The close proximity of the neighbouring local character area of Salisbury Plain West should also be noted, as the village and agricultural character of West Lavington quickly transitions into a more open, expansive landscape of the chalk plain.

5. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION & SITE CHARACTER

Trees, Hedgerows and Vegetation

- 5.1. The site is comprised of two fields (divided by a dilapidated timber fence) of managed modified grassland, with overgrown hedges to the southern and western boundaries. Aside from a thicket of self-seeded Blackthorn scrub to the western boundary, there are no significant trees or vegetation within the main site area itself.
- 5.2. The majority of existing trees on site lie on the southern boundary, forming a continuous screen to White Street and enclosing the site from the carriageway. Species are predominantly Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and are of moderate condition, classified as Category B.
- 5.3. Existing trees to the eastern boundary define the edge of the public footpath and comprise of a group of mature Beech trees, as well as stand-alone specimens of Beech and Birch. Again, these have been classified as Category B, in moderate condition.
- 5.4. A hedgerow of Hawthorn, Blackthorn and brambles also runs along the southern and western boundaries, providing additional screening to and from the site.
- 5.5. A separate existing Tree Schedule and Constraints Plan has been prepared by Aspect Trees and submitted as part of this application.

Topography

- 5.6. The site appears mostly level, with no significant changes in topography, however there's a shallow fall in the contours from west to east across the site. The highest point at 89.00 AOD is located in the northwest corner, with the southeast corner sitting 4m lower at 85.00 AOD. **Figure 1.9** provides the existing site topographic contours.

Ecology

- 5.7. A separate Biodiversity Appraisal for the site has been prepared by Andrew McCarthy Ecology, and submitted with this application. This work included an assessment of the potential for the development to deliver the required Biodiversity Net Gain on site. With the size of the site area and nature of the existing vegetation cover this has proved difficult to fully achieve within the application site area, therefore further 'off site' BNG contribution will be provided.

Adjoining Properties

- 5.8. On the northern boundary six existing properties in Orchard Place have gardens facing directly into the field. Their boundary conditions are a mix of post and wire fencing, timber close-board fencing and concrete block walling, creating an ad hoc appearance.
- 5.9. On the northeast, High Street side of the site, some eight properties adjoin the site. Compared to the houses in Orchard Place, these generally have larger / deeper rear gardens contained behind high hedges with dwellings set lower down in relation to the site levels. A number of these properties have access from their gardens onto the fenced

public footpath running alongside the western boundary. Refer to **Figure 1.14** for location of adjoining properties and their relative sensitivity.

Heritage

- 5.10. The comparative historic and current mapping provided in **Figure 1.10** illustrates the consistency of the local field pattern of the site as well as the location of the more historic buildings to the High Street and Church Street. In later mapping (post 1943), the additions of the school playing fields, the cul-de-sacs of Orchard Place and Sunnyside, as well as the corner plots to White Street/High Street illustrate how the village has developed and grown over the last 80 years.
- 5.11. There are a number of listed buildings in close proximity to the site, the closest being the cottage at number 52 on the High Street (Grade II), of which the property's garden backs onto the western boundary of the site. West Lavington Manor and its associated gate structure is also listed Grade II, sitting opposite the junction to White Street. Although not a registered historic garden, the Manor is occasionally opened to the public as one of the National Open Garden Scheme.
- 5.12. Several archaeological finds have been recoded locally, as referenced in the local Conservation Area Statement. These include evidence of a 2nd–4th century excavated in the nearby grounds of Market Lavington Manor and artefacts linked to a possible late-Medieval settlement in Littleton Panell.
- 5.13. As provided by the published Wiltshire Character Area report, the intensive land use within the Vale means that archaeological evidence is limited compared to the nearby chalk uplands. The close proximity to the character area of High Chalk Plan however provides access to Bronze Age and Iron Age monuments, as well as landscapes undisrupted since Roman times within a few kilometres of the site and village.
- 5.14. These aspects all illustrate the rich historical interest in the wider landscape but do not add evident tangible heritage interest to the specific site area. Trial trenching has been undertaken on the site, concluding that all archaeological remains identified on site are likely to be of a Post Medieval date and as such do not form a constraint for the site. As agreed with Wiltshire Council's archaeologist, there will be no need for further works post consent.

Site Character

- 5.15. The site and surrounding areas reflect the general descriptions that are set out in the published character assessments for the wider area. In particular, the landscape character and topography of the immediate area, including the overall site area beyond the southern edge of the village, is contained and enclosed by escarpments of chalk upland, with varied land cover and medium to large arable fields enclosed by hedgerows.
- 5.16. As an existing green space the site contributes to the general backdrop of agricultural land around the village, and its slightly unmanaged and overgrown condition adds to its marginal, edge-of-village character.
- 5.17. Due to the existing properties adjoining the sites northern and eastern boundaries, as well as the tall hedges running alongside its western and southern boundaries, the site and

immediate area have a contained and enclosed nature. This is in contrast to the more open landscape of the hills overlooking.

- 5.18. Within the CA Statement and Neighbourhood Plan Character Appraisal (NPCA) the site is included on the village plans but not specifically identified as contributing either the village setting or to the CA character. Additionally, the site field is not noted as one of the seven notable green spaces listed in the Statement.
- 5.19. On **Figure 1.8** the footpaths around the site are identified. Within the NPCA the view from the eastern boundary footpath towards the southwest is noted as one of two important landscape views towards Strawberry Hill. The other view is located on the footpath running adjacent to the school playing fields further north.
- 5.20. Outside of the site, White Street is noted as a quiet rural side road leading around to a significant number of other residential properties and village back lanes. The established properties are a mix of individual dwellings of varied ages and a variety of frontage conditions, either buildings facing on to the roads or set back behind substantial hedging or other mature garden vegetation. In the NPCA the open area around Wyneshore House is referred to as a verdant undeveloped area that adds to the rural feeling of White Street and Church Street. White Street is also listed as one of the narrow country lanes within the village that are typically characteristic of this part of the village.

Access and Interest

- 5.21. Currently there is no public access or any recreational use of the main site area, however two public rights of way run along the western and eastern boundaries within the boundary extents.
- 5.22. The site is accessed by a field gate from White Street via a small gravel turning area approximately 70m from the junction to the High Street.
- 5.23. Along the eastern boundary of the site, a fenced-off footpath provides a link between the cul-de-sacs of Orchard Place and Sunnyside down to White Street. This route runs parallel to the High Street and can be used as an alternative to walking along a section of the busy main road.
- 5.24. Running along to the western boundary, another public footpath runs between two hedgerows and connects White Street to the edge of the school playing fields and the northern part of the village. It also connects to Orchard Place and Sunnyside, proving a circular loop around the site. Additionally, this footpath forms part of the Wessex Ridgeway, a long-distance walking route connecting Marlborough to Lyme Regis. At a local level, this provides active travel connections through the village and access up onto Strawberry Hill. The existing network of north-south public footpaths have been noted in the NPCA for their important recreational function.
- 5.25. The local rights of way are illustrated on **Figure 1.7**.

6. VISUAL APPRAISAL

- 6.1. While the site is currently greenfield land, it is contiguous with the built-up area of the village. The site, and indeed the village as a whole, is generally well contained in the landscape and topography, with limited viewpoints from the wider landscape overlooking the area.
- 6.2. With the containment provided by the hedges around the field area, the site is not extensively overlooked from a wide range of viewpoints. Initial scoping of the potential views was undertaken in 2024 as a map-based desktop exercise, followed by walking of the site and surrounding footpaths. The landscape views noted within the Conservation Area Statement and NPCA were also included in the visual appraisal.
- 6.3. The site was visited again in February 2026. The day was dry but overcast, and the visibility was fairly good. From this visit a series of viewpoints for winter views have been selected which are representative of views from footpaths and local lanes, as well as adjoining residential properties.
- 6.4. The existing footpath network is illustrated in **Figure 1.7** and **Figure 2.1** for the location of the photographic viewpoints.
- 6.5. The viewpoints are tabulated in Appendix 2 and are organised into the internal site views, local views from key access routes, and medium distance views from the footpaths and lanes extending out from the site.
- 6.6. The furthest viewpoint included for assessment is around 0.9 km from the site at Strawberry Hill. While in longer distance views the site is theoretically visible, the site and proposals would be barely discernible when viewed alongside the existing village development. A summary of the various views is set out below.
- 6.7. The site approach and frontage is generally concealed from Church Street due to high hedges to adjoining properties and the built-up nature of the High Street. The existing hedge line to the site's southern boundary screens any views onto the site from the junction of High Street and more southerly approaches from White Street (**viewpoints 1 – 4**)
- 6.8. There's a clear line of sight from the footpath running alongside the site's eastern boundary, whilst the footpaths to the western boundary are concealed by continuous field hedgerows and rear gardens for most of the year (**viewpoints 5–6**).
- 6.9. The existing properties adjoining the site to the north have rear garden views into the field. The properties that front on to the High Street have larger back gardens with screening vegetation to the boundary. Their views are generally limited to first floor levels.
- 6.10. The medium range views from the Ridgeway and around to Strawberry Hill lane illustrate how the site is contained by the hedges around the field area, and that the ground level of the site is effectively screened from most public views. These views also highlight the village's setting within it's wider landscape, with the southern part of the settlement lying within wooded hallow at the base of Salisbury Plain (**viewpoints 8–10**).

7. BASELINE SUMMARY AND EVALUATION

- 7.1. Having assessed the existing baseline conditions of the wider context as well as the site and its immediate locale, an evaluation of the sensitivity and susceptibility to the landscape baseline and visual amenity are summarised below.
- 7.2. As a single contained field that is set apart from the adjoining open countryside, the landscape character identified is not unusual or particularly distinct within the county or region, and therefore not noted as highly sensitive in terms of a wider resource of characteristic landscape for this appraisal. This could appear at odds with the status of the wider Special Landscape Area designation for the area, but this classification may relate to a more strategic and general protection of the open swath of countryside between the two National Landscape Areas, rather than notable significance and/or sensitivity.
- 7.3. The site is not designated or considered by this assessment to qualify as a Valued Landscape, however both the CA statement and NPCA study highlight the sensitivity of the historic character of the village and its setting at the base of Salisbury Plain. Whilst the site does not lie within the Conservation Area itself, the importance of landscape views from its edge out toward Strawberry Hill is noted. The visual sensitivity of close-range views from the eastern boundary footpath is also noted.
- 7.4. Along with the public footpath to the eastern boundary, the site area also includes the Ridgeway footpath along its western boundary, linking White Street to Strawberry Hill and Cheverell Road to the north. Despite its enclosed nature, as well used recreational access routes that contribute to a wider network, these are noted as important assets which could be sensitive to major change.
- 7.5. The site contains few physical features other than a band of existing tree cover and hedgerows to its boundary. The roadside tree group next to White Street and internal hedgerows of the site represent important and stable natural assets. The field areas and hedgerows provide only modest wildlife habitat. The site does not provide any wider social or cultural interest or value and is noted as not particularly sensitive in respect of changes to its existing tangible interest, ie wildlife or heritage.
- 7.6. From wider viewpoints, the current site is largely contained within its hedge lined boundaries, however any future built development would be visible from a small number of footpath viewpoints, the nearest being on the Ridgeway path over Strawberry Hill. With visibility of the existing wider village settlement evident from these viewpoints, the views are not inherently sensitive to appropriately designed new development.
- 7.7. The existing properties with modest rear gardens immediately on the northern edge of the site (Orchard Place) have been considered as sensitive to change. The High Street properties would be less sensitive due to garden depths and relative building levels (but would have some visibility to new roofs or upper stories on site). **Figure 1.4** provides a simple assessment of the relative sensitivity of the adjoining properties.

- 7.8. The baseline landscape condition and the baseline visual amenity are summarised in tabular form in **Appendix 1 and 2** respectively as **Figures 1.14 and 1.15 – Issues and Opportunities**. From the assessment and summary it is concluded the site would not qualify as a valued landscape (NPPF)

8. IMPACT APPRAISAL

The Development Proposals

- 8.1. The application proposal is for the erection of 47 dwellings together with access, highways improvements, landscaping, public open space and associated infrastructure – **Figure 3.1**.
- 8.2. Following on from the initial appraisal and conclusion of the issues and opportunities analysis, an initial layout was developed for discussion with the planning authority and public consultation. Initial site studies (including ecology, arboriculture and sustainable drainage) provided some indicative requirements for habitat, vegetation retention and stormwater attenuation in the open space portion of the site. The consultations took place in mid 2025 and feedback was generally positive.
- 8.3. The development layout provides a new entrance to White Street, with the primary vehicular route winding through the site towards the north and looping back onto itself to exit the development. A generous area of green space is proposed at the site entrance and the layout deliberately includes a number of new homes facing out onto the open green space area to provide a positive built frontage and degree of passive surveillance of the space.
- 8.4. The open space area is designed with direct access off White Street and three new connections onto the existing boundary footpaths have also been proposed. The presence of the existing footpaths running north-south along the site, as well as the new masterplan layout and connections create a series of inner and outer walking loops for users to enjoy and explore.
- 8.5. The area of open space is designed as an accessible green space with play features and seating. Smaller areas of incidental POS have been created at key nodes of the masterplan, with informal seating areas provided **Figure 3.2**.
- 8.6. The scheme is designed to discreetly accommodate the residents parking in courtyards off the street – where feasible – to minimise the visual presence of cars within the scheme. Tree planting is proposed within the streets and the parking courtyards to ensure the layout provides an internal treescape.
- 8.7. The landscape design draws on the local interest of hedgerows, signature trees and native style vegetation specifically to blend into the locality. The scheme has been drawn up with reference to the planning guidance for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), sustainable drainage (SuDs) and green infrastructure. Further detail on the landscape strategy and BNG is included within other parts of the application submission. Although the scheme aims to retain existing habitats as far as possible and add appropriate native species, achieving the BNG target is expected to include off-site provision.
- 8.8. The proposed illustrative landscape masterplan is provided in **Figure 3.1**. These show the key elements of the proposed soft landscape, open space and play provision. The application also includes Design and Access Statements in which the intended architectural principles and landscape and open space design strategies are set down (refer to the separate planning application documents the **Design and Access Statement & Landscape Statement**).

- 8.9. The architectural design approach is interrelated with the landscape and local character considerations. The layout reflects the smaller grain scale of developments within West Lavington where clusters of similar houses exist in amongst the wider pattern of individual properties.
- 8.10. The design of the houses follows the principles evident in the architecture of the local area which is generally coherent with red brick elevations, roughcast render, clay or slate roof tiles, casement windows and simple porches etc. These rely on correct scale, hierarchy and proportioning with appropriate detailing.
- 8.11. Provision of the green spaces (primary and incidental) within the field parcel have been located adjacent to the existing rights of way (and their proposed connections) and act as a transition from the existing footpaths to the built development. The proposed main area of public green space would be open to access and visible from the entrance at White Street
- 8.12. The layout allows for a total area of around 0.46ha of public open space along with some retained habitat and buffer areas and internal street frontage landscape. The promoted design approach is for strongly naturalistic environments that allow for imaginative play, appreciation of wildlife and relaxed enjoyment. **Figure 3.2** illustrates the strategy for open space and play across the site.

9. EFFECTS, MITIGATION AND FURTHER DESIGN APPROVAL

- 9.1. The following assessment of the landscape and visual effects of the development is based on the layout as illustrated by the Landscape General Arrangement Plan (Drawing No. 1427-001-PO1). The scheme results in the removal of the grazed field area set at the village edge, with new built development on around 1.5 ha of the total site area of 2.16 ha. The open green space area totals around 0.46 ha, with the remaining land areas consisting of access roads and the highways improvements to White Street.

Construction Stage Effects

Physical Landscape Changes

- 9.2. The proposed development would follow the natural ground levels across the site with no major regrading of levels. The stormwater attenuation area would involve minor earthworks to form the proposed basin and linear swales. There would be no material effect on the existing site topography or drainage.
- 9.3. During the early construction stage some short sections of hedge will be removed to allow for the proposed layout, including connections to the western PROW and access junction. The scheme results in the loss of some 25 linear m of existing hedge and one existing tree (Category B Sycamore). At a later stage, additional proposed sections of native hedge planting would be installed totalling 310 linear. The existing hedge to the western boundary will be laid to improve longevity and promote biodiversity.
- 9.4. As the development progresses and new homes are occupied, the new landscape including trees and other planting will be installed mostly prior to the final completion of the project (some final areas may need to follow final occupations to allow for work within horticultural seasons). The initial effect on the existing vegetation would be a low level minor adverse impact.
- 9.5. There are no other construction stage impacts on the physical landscape fabric or built environment on site.

Landscape Character Effects

- 9.6. The character of the internal working areas of the site would become that of a construction site but as the scheme progresses with the first homes completion envisaged to the site frontage, the internal character impact would be contained to a degree within the site area.
- 9.7. The construction works would have a temporary adverse effect on the landscape character of the site and particularly to the users of the PROW to the eastern boundary. As a quiet landscape the construction activity would impact the character through the visual impact and noise of construction activity. As a very small part of the identified local landscape character area, the presence of some construction would have a minor adverse impact on the area of White Street for the construction phase of the development.

Effects on Access, Recreation and Other Interests

- 9.8. The proposals would not require any alteration of any existing public right of way or recreational use.
- 9.9. While the general village and wider landscape around the area includes some heritage and wildlife interest, none is noted as adding tangible public interest within the existing site area baseline condition.

Visual Impact During Construction

- 9.10. By virtue of their very nature construction works can be visually intrusive. Heavy plant machinery is by necessity brightly coloured. Areas of stripped topsoil and stockpiles of materials will often stand out in views. The sight of such works can be temporarily intrusive within a rural location but with a small scheme ongoing for a short duration the impact may be limited to specific or sensitive views.
- 9.11. As identified in the visual appraisal section the site is overlooked from a number of residential properties and public viewpoints.
- 9.12. The impact on the White Street frontage viewpoints is assessed as a **minor adverse visual impact** for the later phases of the development.
- 9.13. The residential properties immediately adjoining the site boundary in Orchard Place will have views of construction of the new dwellings. As they are generally rear garden and living room views, they are noted as a short-term **substantial impact** on the properties, and a **moderate impact** on the other dwellings to the High Street. The likely duration of the construction phase is expected to be quite short.
- 9.14. Views from the adjacent PROWs onto the site will be impacted during the construction works. The views from the eastern boundary footpath are assessed as a short-term **major impact**, however due to its contained nature, views from the PROW on the western boundary is assessed as **moderate-low**.
- 9.15. The impact on views from viewpoints on Strawberry Hill is assessed as a **moderate adverse visual impact** for the construction phases of the development.

Post Construction Operational Effects

- 9.16. At completion of the development, all the properties are assumed to be occupied and all the proposed landscape works would be installed and open space areas open to public use. With most of area of open space created around the retained hedge lined boundaries of field space, it is envisaged they would be well established at completion.

Physical Landscape Effects – Post Construction

- 9.17. The proposals result in around 1.5 ha of built residential development, including buildings, private rear gardens, internal roadways and pavements, as well as incidental internal green space. While the application area extends to some 2.16 ha the remaining areas comprise of proposed open green space, habitat enhancement areas and the White Street approach. In the context of the requirement for some areas of greenfield land needing to

be released for residential development within the county, the limited area of 'greenfield' land loss for these proposals at 1.5 ha is assessed as a **Low-Negligible Adverse** Impact.

- 9.18. Some minor earthworks would be required for the stormwater attenuation basin but otherwise the scheme works with the existing site levels. The scheme includes a sustainable drainage arrangement with some areas of open shallow swales to convey water across the open space area. The proposals have no material impact on the site topography or natural drainage from the site.
- 9.19. The scheme requires the removal of one existing tree and some short sections of hedge would be lost during construction as noted above. The Landscape Masterplan indicates a substantial net gain in new and hedge canopy cover.
- 9.20. The mix of new trees within the housing layout include street trees along the main access, side streets and parking areas. The tree strategy includes some 6 no. large specie 'legacy' trees within the layout. These would generally be planted as 'Advanced Nursery Stock' specified with 16-18cm girths. Edible species are proposed to the western boundary which provides residents the opportunity to pick apples and for biodiversity benefit. After 7 – 8 years it is expected all the tree stock would be well established and having a notable presence within the scheme. By 15 years after planting most planting would be in the order of 6 m in height.
- 9.21. As the proposals provide a net gain of tree planting to the site area, this is assessed as a **Minor Beneficial effect** at 15 years.
- 9.22. The completed proposals have no impact on the quality or condition of the existing built or designed environment around the site. The new development creates a slight extension of the village settlement to the west, however continues the line of the other housing to The Orchards, creating a stronger settlement boundary to the wider landscape. As a small collection of coordinated buildings, the scheme should read as a positive addition to the village housing stock. Relative to the overall scale of the village this is noted as very minor change (**Negligible Beneficial effect**).

Landscape Character Effects – Post Construction

- 9.23. In relation to the national and district level landscape character assessment areas, the proposed development represents no real change to these broad scale assessment areas.
- 9.24. The built development areas clearly change the immediate site from agricultural landscape to residential settings and to a small degree influence the character of the open landscape immediately adjoining. The scheme moves the presence of new housing out from the existing residential edge to the western site boundary, by a distance of around 100m. The wider influence on character is in turn limited by the proposed landscape on the outer edge and the adjacent contained landscape of smaller fields.
- 9.25. This and the intended style of housing fits well with the nature of this side of the village which is a well-established settlement. The effect on the published landscape character areas is noted as **no material change** at completion and at 15 years post completion.
- 9.26. At the finer grain of site-specific character areas, the proposals change the local lane frontage and internal character of the field. The internal character of the housing provides

a pattern of smaller grain housing with a short street spaces and courtyards. The houses immediately within the development will provide an attractive frontage to the area of public open space. Further into the scheme, the houses on the main street have some larger front gardens and set back parking to reduce the presence of on street parking and allow space for trees. The small parking courtyards are accessed by narrow lanes and include landscaping along with access to rear gardens. The layout reflects the more traditional character of small village development and reflects the small-scale nature of the existing field pattern of and around the site.

- 9.27. The main area of open green space is located at the entrance of the site, on the retained southern boundary, with the existing hedge and tree line creating a sense of enclosure and establishment. This space is designed to be fully integrated within the flood mitigation strategy and, utilising the change in levels, provides interesting landforms to explore and enjoy. The intended play and seating features are intentionally informal designs based on natural timber and stone materials.
- 9.28. A series of incidental open spaces feature at key connections into the site from the adjoining PROW network and provide additional seating and resting opportunities. The liner open space to the western boundary offers additional surface water run-off capacity in the form of swales, and the vegetation between these and the existing hedge will be managed as reptile habitat enhancements, featuring a number of hibernacula.
- 9.29. The existing internal blackthorn hedge to the western boundary will be traditionally laid to rejuvenate it's somewhat leggy and patchy growing condition. This will not only improve its habitat value and regenerate growth (and in turn create a denser boundary condition to the site) but provide visual, social and environmental interest and variety to the PROW running alongside it.
- 9.30. With the gentle transition from housing to the continuing farmland outside of the site area, the adjoining landscape would be unaffected by the proposals.
- 9.31. The containment of the PROW between the proposed development and the existing rear gardens to the eastern boundary will undoubtedly change the character of the footpath from it's open condition, however by widening its current width and creating a planted hedge to the new rear gardens (drawing on the presence of beech hedgerows and tree lines within the site locale), the effects will in the long term be **Minor-negligible adverse**.
- 9.32. On the lane, the presence of a new junction and footpath will be perceived as a small change of character, however the new highway works will provide a formal, safer connection between the High Street pavement and PROW networks.
- 9.33. The scheme does not impact on the character of the village beyond the additional properties occupying the field as noted above.
- 9.34. The overall impact on the site character areas is noted as a **Minor-negligible adverse** effects at completion reduced to **negligible adverse** effect at 15 years. At the same time the proposals are considered to provide an attractive residential character to the development and a **Minor-Negligible beneficial effect** change to the existing village edge with the creation of a transitional open space and altered entrance into the built-up area.

Effects on Access, Recreation and Other Interests – Post Construction

- 9.35. As there are currently no public rights of way or recreational use of the field area itself, at completion there would be no adverse effects on any existing access and recreational use. The scheme would create a new area of open space and a small circuit of access off White Lane and adjoining PROW's that would be open to existing and new residents alike. There is a **Minor Beneficial** Impact with the provision of the additional open space areas.
- 9.36. While the proposals will require off-site provision / credits to achieve Biodiversity Net Gain, the scheme allows for wildlife enhancement areas and features to add visible connections to local wildlife interest. These include reptile hibernacula to the western boundary, swift and bat boxes to building elevations and bee bricks and hedgehog holes to garden boundaries.
- 9.37. At the same time, the additional native tree and hedge planting and management within the open space areas and habitat management of the retained landscape would improve conditions for garden and woodland bird species along with other varieties of smaller wildlife. The proposed approach to the open space landscape also includes areas of wildflower grasslands and fruiting trees to add seasonal natural interest. Overall, as the scheme would allow more people to connect to nature through the new open spaces this is noted as a **Minor-Negligible Beneficial Effect**.
- 9.38. In its current form, aside from the two footpaths along its boundaries, the site does not provide any social space, public realm or play function. The public open space areas will include for seating and play and other areas of foraging fruit trees and shrubs. These will be open to the wider community as part of creating a welcoming neighbourhood. Within the layout some areas are also designed with edible planting with some perennial food plants (fruiting / nut trees and shrubs as well as ground cover herbs providing a sustainable food aspect for residents to enjoy). As small low-key areas these cultural / social benefits are noted as a **Minor-Negligible Beneficial Effect**.
- 9.39. Within the site, proposed stormwater attenuation features demonstrate a sustainable approach to urban drainage while also creating seasonally damp habitats of visual and ecological interest. The landscape proposals include edible foraging species and a natural play and social space, offering further examples of sustainable design with added interest and educational value. Collectively, these elements contribute a layer of sustainable design interest to the site, resulting in a **Minor beneficial** landscape effect.
- 9.40. The various 'residual' Landscape effects are set out in tabular form in Appendix 1.

Visual Impact – Post Construction

- 9.41. Once the construction works are complete and new landscape installed, the scheme will start to settle into the locality. Due to the sheltered site position on the south side of the village the development will not be particularly prominent in the landscape. With the presence of existing housing adjoining the site, the new scheme need not be seen as out of context or inherently intrusive. There are no views towards the scheme that don't currently include the existing village backdrop.

- 9.42. In the immediate proximity of the site, the proposals will result in a small change in the views along White Lane. The new site entrance will have replaced a small section of hedgerow and an existing tree, and the proposed highway works will remove a section of grass verge. The existing gated entrance will be replanted with new hedgerow species. While different from the existing situation, the scheme will not be visually out of keeping with the location. At the site entrance, a view into the new access will reveal a row of additional buildings, acting as a frontage to the POS area. As a change from a rural landscape view to development these are assessed as **minor adverse** impacts but the general visual amenity of the lane is essentially unharmed.
- 9.43. Turning off White Street, traversing along the PROW to the eastern boundary, the development would have a noticeable effect on the views to the open field of the existing site at present. The current views that can be seen over the existing timber stock proof fence towards Strawberry Hill will be replaced by the rear garden boundaries of the new development, screened by proposed beech hedge planting. This would have a **moderate adverse** effect on visual connectivity to the wider landscape, however, over time this would reduce to **moderate-low adverse** as a new, alternative north-south route can be used within the development itself, with views out towards the west through the proposed streetscape alignment.
- 9.44. The existing visibility from the PROWS to the western boundary are limited by the established hedgerow and boundary planting to adjacent fields and properties. A group of existing tall coniferous trees to the boundary of neighbouring fields also limits the effects on views from the Ridgeway path heading towards Strawberry Hill.
- 9.45. Continuing the Ridgeway footpath southwest, the local landmark of Strawberry Hill – defined by its prominent telecom towers – can be accessed by another adjoining footpath. Due to its elevated position, the proposed scheme is of most relevance to these views. Whilst the site is visually contained at ground level by the existing hedgerow boundary structure, the new roofscape and gable ends would appear visible over the vegetation. From this viewpoint however, the development will sit below the backdrop of most existing properties on the High Street and the village beyond, occupying only a small part of the settlement view. In addition, the layout includes new tree planting within the housing layout. By 15 years this would start to be visible between the buildings and in the longer term the legacy trees would be taller, breaking up the roofline. As a recreational footpath view, these are noted as of high sensitivity but as only limited change is anticipated, the impact is a minor-negligible adverse effect.
- 9.46. The footpath route continues down the face of Strawberry Hill in the form of a single-track lane, with views of the site to the north in its upper section. In comparison to the view from the top of Strawberry Hill, only a partial section of the site is visible due to existing hedge lines and tree canopies to the east of the site. Where the development is visible, only the roofscape and gable ends will be visible over established vegetation. Again, the development will sit below the backdrop of most existing properties on the High Street and the village beyond.
- 9.47. The assessment has included consideration of the views from the neighbouring properties. Many of the adjoining dwellings are set back with reasonably deep vegetated rear gardens, however the properties to Orchard Place are noted as of higher sensitivity due to their proximity to the boundary edge. The masterplan layout has been developed with the existing building position and garden sizes in mind in order to minimise any

adverse effects on the existing residents' views and residential amenity. The properties to The Orchards are assessed as experiencing Moderate-Minor Adverse Visual Impact at 15 years after completion of the development.

9.48. The final range of 'residual' visual impact effects are noted in tabular form in Appendix 2.

10. MITIGATION AND FURTHER DESIGN

- 10.1. The application proposals have been drawn up with sensitivity to the existing landscape of the site and its locality. A strong framework of building frontages and landscape setting are envisaged to create a development that sits comfortably into this location and provides an attractive welcoming residential environment.
- 10.2. As the construction stages of the project are progressed, further detailed information would be prepared for approval by the local planning authority. These would be informed by the Design and Access Statement and Landscape Statement and follow the Landscape Master Plan (**Figure 3.1**). This would confirm measures needed to deliver the masterplan as illustrated. Details on the hard and soft landscape layouts, planting plans, schedules and specifications would be submitted as required by planning conditions along with details of boundary treatments, play features and street furniture.
- 10.3. Within the proposals the existing hedgerows and individual trees are largely retained as an integral part of the layout design. Tree protection measures and longer-term management of the retained trees will be necessary to ensure the intended retentions are achieved and the longer-term benefits occur.
- 10.4. A long-term landscape and ecology management plan would be expected to form part of the remaining planning stage submissions.
- 10.5. The landscape areas would be installed and maintained by suitably qualified contractors. Standard planning conditions would normally require the replacement of any planting that fails within the initial five years after completion of the development phases.
- 10.6. In the longer term, the landscape would be managed within a private management company, which will undertake seasonal maintenance operations as required and set out in the landscape and ecology management plan.

11. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 11.1 The proposals have been drawn up with the intention of creating an attractive place to live and with due regard to the local environment. The site layout, building massing and height, protection of existing trees and vegetation and distribution of open space have all been considered as part of the design process. The above masterplanning considerations ensure the proposed development would sit comfortably within the locality. The illustrative masterplan and the associated landscape strategy are briefly described in this report and a fuller description of the proposals is set out within the separate, submitted Design and Access / Landscape Statements.
- 11.2 This appraisal is based on a comprehensive study of the many ways in which landscapes may be used, viewed, or otherwise valued. The potential for effects on the landscape has been considered as distinct from visual effects, in line with the methodology set out in this document. The effects of the scheme during the construction phase and as a completed development have been assessed.
- 11.3 Within the baseline appraisal the application site has been identified as greenfield land on the edge of the existing expanded village. The site is located away from the National Landscape (formerly AONB) areas of the North Wessex Downs and Cranbourne Chase to the north and south, respectively.
- 11.4 The proposals respect the existing physical landscape resources of the site and offer retention and positive future management of the retained vegetation. The built development sits on some 1.5 ha of the overall 2.16 ha site with much of the balance taken into the proposed landscape framework as open green space. The creation of new areas of POS, along with their ecological enhancements, contribute to the local Green Infrastructure network, especially as they are located adjacent to existing lines of vegetation and habitats.
- 11.5 The proposals would have no material adverse effect on the established landscape character areas. In relation to the site level landscape character the assessment is noted as a Moderate–Minor Adverse effects at completion reduced to Minor–Negligible Adverse effect at 15 years. Alongside the change to the landscape character the proposals introduce some positive characteristics in the form of the transitional green spaces, habitat enhancements and subtle alteration of the transition into the built-up area.
- 11.6 No recreational function currently exists on the site, however footpaths are present to the western and eastern boundaries. The scheme provides new open spaces that the existing community can use, and improves the connections between people, the village and natural assets in the wider context. With these aspects, along with the other measures to previously noted, the scheme would contribute to the GI resource of the village, as set out in Wiltshire Core Strategy.
- 11.7 The proposals would be seen in the context of existing residential development and with the backdrop of the village in the relatively few public viewpoints that overlook the site. Localised Moderate and Moderate–Minor impacts are noted in relation to the views at completion of the development. These diminish over time as the site weathers in and tree planting becomes more established.

- 11.8 Some 15 properties adjoin or are close to the site boundary. Many of these have some existing view over the site fields and care has been to minimise the intrusion of the proposed new housing. The properties in Orchard Place are noted as having more restricted rear gardens and habitable rooms with views to the site. The layout has been designed to minimise the impact on these and the others as far as is practicable. The resultant impacts are noted as moderate-minor adverse to those properties on the northern boundary.
- 11.9 Relative to the overall number of proposed new homes the level of adverse landscape and visual effects is limited and will diminish in the years following construction. At the same time the scheme provides a high-quality residential setting with open space and access opportunities that would be accessible to existing residents and the wider community.

REFERENCES

- [1] The third edition of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3) – 2013
- [2] 'Notes and Clarifications' guidance Landscape Institute LITGN-2024-01 (2024).

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 :
Landscape Baseline and Impact Summary

Appendix 2 :
Visual Amenity Baseline and Impact Summary

Appendix 3:
Study Methodology

APPENDIX 1 : LVA – Landscape Summary Table

BASELINE CONDITIONS					IMPACT ASSESSMENT				
Aspect	Description	Importance, Value, Designation, Extent, or scale	Susceptibility or Potential for Enhancement	Sensitivity	Effect	Scale / Magnitude	Degree	Permanence Mitigation / Post 15 years Receptors	Residual Impact (Adverse / Beneficial) Significant
Context	Small site at edge of established village - mostly residential setting along historic High Street with clusters of small post-war / modern developments to the north. There are no landscape designations on the site, however it falls within a Special Landscape Area – wider landscape to southwest transitions to open countryside. A Conservation Area includes properties to the High Street, but does not include the site itself. Site does not fall within settlement boundary set out in CA Statement.	Medium Despite SLA context, value is limited by general context of extensive village backdrop. Wider village within National Landscape setting but site less connected.	As a historic village location, there is some sensitivity to extensive generic development but the range of existing, highly varied, mix of built development means area not inherently sensitive to new well designed development – low.	Medium/Low	Small scale change to White Street frontage, little effect to existing village and wider character.	Limited - Small scale change / development to generally contained site.	Subtle changes relative to the overall wider context of a quiet residential street away from main road through village	Permanent change, softened by Y15 as development embedded in locality	No Change
Physical Landscape Resources Aspects below may form part of local LCA and / or be of intrinsic value in own right									
Topography / Drainage	Gentle fall to site from northwest to southeast	Subtle landform - no separate importance or value.	N/A	N/A	Minimal regrading for new SuDs basin. New drainage features / swales to western boundary.	Immaterial changes	Minor integrated features	N/A	No change
Land Use (landscape contribution terms – not Agricultural Land Classification)	Typical low key grazing, typical of village edge context. 2.16 ha greenfield site – greenfield land holds intrinsic value, however housing supply requirements suggests some GF land essential in context of wider development needs.	Low - 2.16 ha - small area, therefore limited intrinsic value.	Land use change for housing equates to direct loss. Changes of use such as POS more indirect or reversible nature change	Low	Green field loss to built infrastructure / development. Some POS areas retained as existing PROWs, access and habitat mitigation areas.	Development area (approx. 1.5ha) covers 70% of site with remaining acting as open space, access and highways improvements.	Complete change to developed areas (inc landscaped POS).	Permanent change	Low-Negligible Adverse Effect
Vegetation	Limited extent of existing tree cover, however boundary trees to southern edges and southeastern corner define the frontage of the site and adjacent footpaths. Hedgerow boundaries noted as important natural assets in Local Character Appraisal and typifies character to village. Mostly visible in public views	Medium - limited extent of cover on site. Hedgerows hold high intrinsic value, but limited due to current poor condition.	Trees ‘sensitive’ to direct loss or indirect changes. Rural location with unmanaged trees and occasional losses are part of normal change.	Low	Localised existing tree & hedge loss. Existing put into positive management + new planting net gain.	Minimal loss – 1 no. existing tree removed for new entrance Minimal loss at c. 25 m of hedgerow for new entrance and connections into PROW. New planting at more extensive scale net gain overall.	Improvement in tree numbers and canopy extent. Hedgerows managed condition across small site area.	By Y15 scale of provision would be well established	Moderate-Low Beneficial Effect

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Aspect	Description	Importance, Value, Designation, Extent, or scale	Susceptibility or Potential for Enhancement	Sensitivity	Effect	Scale / Magnitude	Degree	Permanence Mitigation / Post 15 years Receptors	Residual Impact (Adverse / Beneficial) Significant
Built & Designed Environment	Existing built development adjoining site is a mix of modern, post-war and historic dwellings with varied styles and forms. Local Character Appraisal notes dispersed nature of built form to area however the application site is contained by strong linear boundaries. Grade II Listed cottage at No. 52 High Street – garden backing onto site. Local design standards highlight general presumption for good quality new developments.	Low - some existing built context to respect.	Scope to accommodate some change.	Moderate	New development adding small collection of coordinated well designed homes with designed landscape framework as addition to village.	Small scale addition to overall village.	Modest and appropriate design approach - not intended to stand out as major feature.	By Y15 new trees would provide strong landscape framework to housing	Low Beneficial Effect
Land & Townscape Character									
Established Character Areas	Site set within extent of Greensand Vale within the Vale of Pewsey Character Area Village and wider context typical of character area, demonstrating highly settled vales with wider varied land cover - pasture along tributaries and arable in medium to large fields enclosed by hedgerows.	Moderate Small part of LAC's.	Susceptibility to loss of area & intrusion of ubiquitous development	Low	Development represents minor encroachment into overall area. Responds to village landscape transition with small field spaces, positive frontages on entrance to built-up area & sympathetic built form.	N/A to National LCA Very small relative to defined county LCA's	No material change to wider appreciation of settlement in rolling countryside. Existing built-up edge softened.	Presence of development softened by Y15 as existing & proposed trees and planting established.	No material change to LCA's
Site Specific Character	Existing built-up village edge, varying architectural styles and periods, gardens reducing semi-natural rural character. Local Character Appraisal notes dispersed nature of built form to area however the application site is contained by strong linear boundaries. Wider landscape transitions into more natural farmland / open countryside. Main village – wooded, sprawling character to southeast, more developed, denser settlement to the north. School playing fields to northwest.	Fields Low Wider landscape Medium White Street Context Medium Village Context Low	Existing settled backdrop suggests limited sensitivity to new similar residential development. Wider open fields susceptible if intrusions markedly different from existing development character.	Site, Lane & Village – Medium-Low Adjoining wider landscape Medium-Low	Site level character change to internal fields. Character of White Street maintained with retention of hedgerow and trees, however short section of minor change with entrance point. Continuation of settlement line on north-south axis from The Orchards – subtly change of existing village edge. Neighbouring fields still offering landscape transition to wider open countryside.	Development area (approx. 1.5ha) covers 70% of site with remaining acting as open space. Short section of minor change for new entrance. Minimal notable change	Complete internal change. Other areas – softer edges changes subtle differences to existing. New development quietly complements existing village Transitional small fields outside of site minimal influence	Subtle improvement in boundary & Open Green Spaces by Y15.	Low adverse impact on internal character. Low beneficial residential & POS Character on seen on wider adjoining areas of retained fields & Lane frontage. Low neutral change to village approach Immaterial change to village

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BASELINE CONDITIONS					IMPACT ASSESSMENT				
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Function / Interest / Other Value									
Footpaths / Active Travel	Site not currently accessible. Existing public footpaths run north-south on western and eastern boundaries of site. Western footpath forms part of Ridgeway long distance walk.	Footpaths are important community asset at local level.	Footpaths retained - not affected by proposals.	Low	Limited effect - improvement to eastern footpath through widening of space between back of existing housing and development boundary. Resurfacing from grass path to consolidated gravel. Western footpath internal hedgerow maintained as laid hedge – improving amenity value and perception of village edge.	No significant change in existing footpath network	New connections provided into development, creating circular walks around and through the site.	Subtle improvement in boundary conditions by Y15.	Low beneficial effect
Recreational Open Space / Function	No current recreational function	None existing but aspect inherently valuable	Potential for beneficial change	Moderate Low (potential to enhance)	New open space areas with connections from White Street and adjoining PROWS.	Opens new recreational & amenity areas	Range of natural space and facilities or recreational features	By Y15 new green spaces of benefit to new and wider community	Low beneficial effect
Heritage	No tangible heritage interest on site		None existing - limits potential for beneficial change	N/A					
Wildlife	Occasional presence – farmland / garden birds possible – appreciated from PROWS. Refer to Ecologists Report for detailed survey and mitigation recommendations.	Limited existing value, but aspect of inherent value for community.	Wildlife sensitive to loss of open landscape but also new habitat can be rapidly populated.	Low (potential to enhance)	Provision for wildlife spaces and features – not only potential to attract range of species but improves public exposure to wildlife and appreciation	New habitats introduced and reptile mitigation area proposed. Net gain addressed in Ecologists BNG Assessment.	Overtly included in Landscape Strategy - scope for noticeable permanent interest.	By Y15 scope for good nature connections for new residents & wider community.	Low beneficial effect
Cultural / Social / Community	No current function for any cultural / social use. Social spaces recognised for health and wellbeing benefits.	Limited existing but aspect of inherent value	Potential for beneficial change	Low (potential to enhance)	New social spaces created within site & openly accessible to wider community	Play and formal rec areas c. 0.4ha	Neighbourhood scale provision	Mainly benefit new residents but open to all.	Low beneficial effect
Green Infrastructure, Sustainable Objectives, Health & Wellbeing	No current recognised GI function	None existing but aspect inherently valuable	Potential for beneficial change	Low (potential to enhance)	Remaining landscape / habitat features taken into positive GI framework	Scheme aimed at providing c1.0. ha of GI	Green spaces multifunctional & suitably connected to wider community via White Lane and PROW access.	Fully established by Y15 primarily of benefit to new residents but some wider community benefits in play	Moderate-Low beneficial effect

APPENDIX 2 : Visual Amenity Baseline and Impact Assessment

View Type Viewpoint	Title Description	Sensitivity, Value and Susceptibility	Change	Magnitude	Completion Impact	Residual Effect at 15 Years
Public Roads & Footpaths:						
1	Church Street – view looking northeast towards junction of White Street taken from footpath running alongside West Lavington Manor boundary wall.	Low	None – site not visible from this viewpoint, view included for context.	None	None	None – no change
2	Church Street – view looking southeast directly into White Street taken from footpath outside West Lavington Manor gate structure	Low	Proposed highway works to grass verge – new footpath and drop kerbs to driveway of No. 1A Church Street.	Small scale change to character of White Street	Negligible Adverse	None
3	White Street – view looking towards junction of Church Street/High Street towards West Lavington Manor gate structure. Taken from driveway to No. 1A Church Street.	Low – Location set back from busy village High Street.	Proposed highway works to grass verge – new footpath and drop kerbs to driveway entrance of No. 1A Church Street.	Small scale change to character of White Street.	Negligible Adverse	None
4	White Street – view looking northeast towards No. 1A Church Street driveway entrance and proposed development entrance location (behind parked cars)	Moderate – Low. Location set back from busy village High Street.	Proposed highway works to grass verge – new footpath and drop kerbs to driveway of No. 1A Church Street. New entrance to development visible and loss of 1 no. existing tree to facilitate proposed junction.	Medium scale change to site frontage at close range	Minor Adverse	Negligible Adverse

APPENDIX 2 : Visual Amenity Baseline and Impact Assessment

View Type Viewpoint	Title Description	Sensitivity, Value and Susceptibility	Change	Magnitude	Completion Impact	Residual Effect at 15 Years
5	PROW – view from footpath running alongside eastern boundary of application site. Open views into site.	High-moderate – village recreational footpath, providing alternative route to High Street pavements.	Open views into site over existing stock-proof fence will be replaced by views of development. Proposed housing will be set back from boundary edge with rear gardens adjoining the PROW. The footpath widened and new hedge planting to the proposed garden boundaries designed as the 'Beech Walk' – a feature based on the existing beech trees on site and hedges found within the village. A substantial change to the view, but designed to replicate existing garden boundaries.	Large scale change	Moderate Adverse	Moderate-low adverse.
6	PROW – view from footpath running alongside western boundary of application site. Concealed / glimpsed views into site due to high boundary hedge.	Moderate-Low – rural recreational footpath and part of Ridgeway Long Distance Trail.	Existing unmanaged hedge to boundary condition to be traditionally laid as part of the wider management of the proposed landscape and ecological enhancements. A strip of incidental open space to the western edge of the development sets back proposed dwellings and in the longer term limits views of new buildings from the PROW.	Medium scale change	Negligible Adverse	Minor Benefit

APPENDIX 2 : Visual Amenity Baseline and Impact Assessment

View Type Viewpoint	Title Description	Sensitivity, Value and Susceptibility	Change	Magnitude	Completion Impact	Residual Effect at 15 Years
7	PROW – view from footpath running alongside properties to The Orchards and school playing fields.	Low – rural recreational footpath	Limited change – development site screened by tall hedge planting to The Orchards properties and existing scrub and trees to the development site's northern boundary.	None	No change	No change
8	Ridgeway – view looking northeast towards application site from footpath and field edge.	Low – rural recreational footpath	Minimal change – Development area screened by boundary planting to fields and sports pitches as well as foreground coniferous tree group.	None	No change	No change
9	Strawberry Hill – view looking northeast, directly over application site, taken from Parish Council community bench at base of telecoms towers.	Moderate – rural recreational footpath	Full area of development in view due to elevated position over application site. Development will be screened at the lower level by boundary planting however the new roofscape will be visible from this location. The development will sit below the backdrop of most existing properties on the High Street and the village beyond. Site occupies only small part of settlement in the view.	Small to medium change to overall view of developed village	Minor adverse	Minor– Negligible adverse

APPENDIX 2 : Visual Amenity Baseline and Impact Assessment

View Type Viewpoint	Title Description	Sensitivity, Value and Susceptibility	Change	Magnitude	Completion Impact	Residual Effect at 15 Years
10	Strawberry Hill track – view taken at midpoint of track between the crest of Strawberry Hill and village settlement.	Moderate – rural recreational footpath	Partial area of development in view. Development will be screened at ground level more than View 9 due to drop in elevation. The development will sit below the backdrop of most existing properties on the High Street and the village beyond. Site occupies only small part of settlement in the view.	Small to medium change to overall view of developed village	Minor adverse	Minor– Negligible adverse
Residential Views:						
	No. 1A Church Street – large detached property set back from development site with timber fence and tall hedge to garden boundary. Large beech trees sit on boundary line providing screening in spring/summer months.	Low	Potential 1 st floor views into existing field replaced with new POS. Frontage and rooflines to dwellings facing POS could be glimpsed through boundary vegetation at 1 st floor. Limited change at ground floor due to boundary condition.	Medium – views changed from open field to new POS	Minor adverse	Minor– Negligible adverse
	No. 1 High Street – large detached property, similar in boundary condition to No. 1A, however due to the house's angled orientation, the rear garden to this property is shallower. Large beech trees sit on boundary line providing screening in spring/summer months.	Moderate	Rooflines of proposed garage unit & new dwelling visible over retained boundary hedge.	Medium – Views from 1 st floor single aspect of property notably changed	Minor–Moderate adverse	Minor adverse
	No. 54 High Street – Reasonably set back from application boundary. Rear garden adjoins PROW and application site. Tall mature hedge to boundary screens view from ground floor rooms with assumed views from first floor.	Moderate	Rooflines of proposed garage units & new dwellings visible over retained boundary hedge.	Medium – Views from 1 st floor single aspect of property notably changed	Minor–Moderate adverse	Minor adverse

APPENDIX 2 : Visual Amenity Baseline and Impact Assessment

View Type Viewpoint	Title Description	Sensitivity, Value and Susceptibility	Change	Magnitude	Completion Impact	Residual Effect at 15 Years
	No. 52 High Stret – Grade II listed cottage. Historically more sensitive than other properties on High Street however tall mature hedge to boundary screens view from ground floor rooms. Assumed views from first floor.	Moderate	Potential 1 st floor views into existing field replaced with new rooflines of development. Perpendicular alignment of development's access road increases sense of openness from this property, maintaining views to landscape beyond.	Medium – Views from 1 st floor single aspect of property notably changed	Minor–Moderate adverse	Minor adverse
	No's 50 to 44 – Reasonably set back from application boundary. Rear garden adjoins PROW and application site. Tall mature hedge to boundary screens view from ground floor rooms with assumed views from first floor.	Low	Rooflines of proposed new dwellings visible over retained boundary hedge. New tree planting softens boundary edge.	Medium – Views from 1 st floor single aspect of property notably changed	Minor–Moderate adverse	Minor adverse
	Bungalows to Orchard Place – single story dwellings with shallower rear gardens than previous properties above. Lower garden boundary conditions compared to High Street properties – assumed greater scope for visibility.	High	Open views into site over existing garden boundaries will be replaced by views of development. A new boundary fence will provide privacy to residents and careful placement of new tree planting will soften the boundary condition. New houses have been set back from the boundary edge and parking courts aligned with existing properties to maximise sense of openness from their rear gardens.	Large – Outlook changed with new fence / loss of view into field.	Moderate adverse	Moderate–minor adverse

APPENDIX 3: Study Methodology

1.0 LVIA Methodology

1.1 Preface

We aim to ensure that our assessments are clear, consistent, and easy to understand — both in terms of the methodology applied and the way findings are presented. Landscape issues frequently become a central focus of concern for local residents, so our assessments aim to provide readable and comprehensive explanations of how places may change, addressing the matters that people are most likely to care about.

At the same time landscape and visual matters are at least in part subjective and the assessments often require multiple considerations to be drawn together into a single judgement. The guidelines and applied methodologies set out frameworks for structuring assessments and maintaining consistent language which are helpful. Ultimately, the thought process of describing the existing conditions and then identifying how these may be impacted upon is often the most constructive part of the process and the essential part of taking a reader along with the final assessment(s).

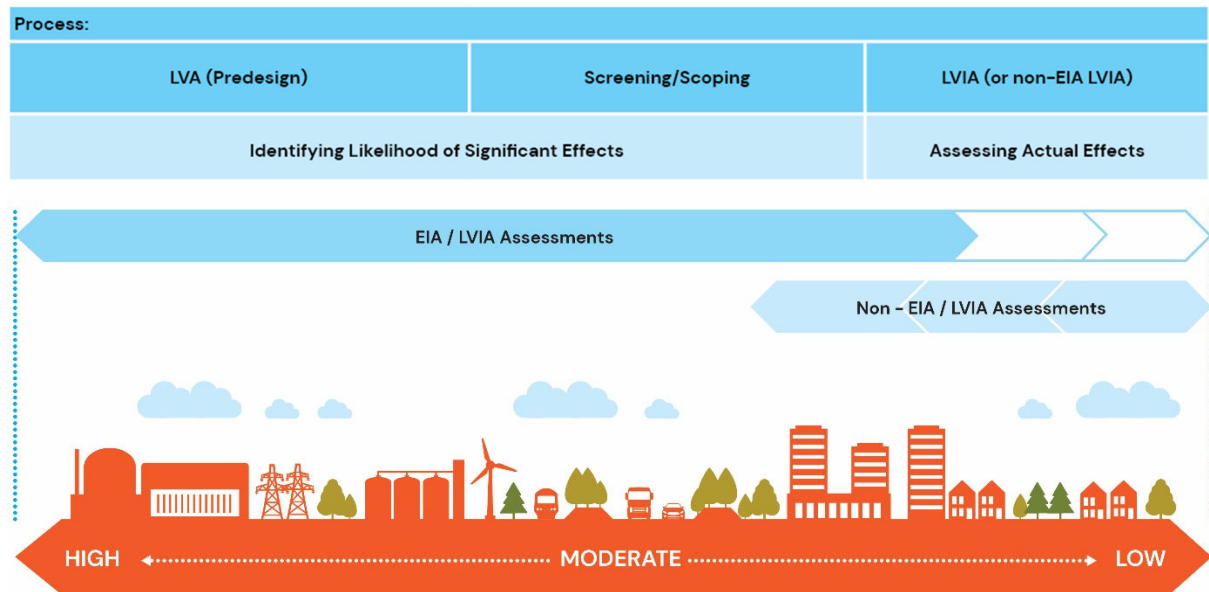
Our approach as set out below is to take a comprehensive view of how landscapes may be used viewed or otherwise valued; by doing this we can ensure project are thoroughly reviewed and considerably designed such that there is a coherent logic to the assessment reports.

As a practice we are increasingly aware of a 'nature deficit'; the urgent need to protect biodiversity as a vital resource, and the recognition of natural environments as essential to human health and wellbeing. As a profession, we are at the forefront of addressing these challenges, with a responsibility to balance competing priorities while upholding professional standards and protecting the environment.

1.2 Relative Assessments of Effect

The Landscape Institute recommends that assessments should be applied consistently across projects [LITGN-2024-01] with the enormous range of development proposals this can present a challenge. If the same methodology and range of impact descriptions are applied to wildly different scenarios it can be hard to judge where a modest scale residential development scheme may sit relative to the higher level impacts of major infrastructure projects.

Our professional advice on the likelihood of significant effects may be needed at the outset or early stages of a project. This can be as part of an initial Landscape Appraisal (LVA), or as contribution to the EIA Screening and Scoping process. Landscape appraisals are an important tool in identifying likely effects and guiding design. Many projects will present some degree of adverse impact, especially at early stages.



2.0 LVIA Methodology:

Non EIA LVIA Methodology

Introduction

This report provides the landscape and visual impact assessment for the proposed residential development at White Street, West Lavington, Wiltshire. The assessment is provided as part of the planning application submitted on behalf of CG Fry and Son Ltd. The assessment has been undertaken following the methodology set out below.

This study has been prepared to provide an analysis of the expected changes in the landscape and local views that would arise from the proposals. The project has been subject to an EIA 'Screening' exercise from which it has been determined that an EIA is not required for the planning submission. This assessment is therefore a 'Non-EIA' LVIA assessment; which means that while the assessment approach is similar the study is more informal than an EIA study and does not report on any 'Significant' Landscape or Visual Impacts.

Although a non-ES assessment this study still provides a structured assessment undertaken in accordance with best practice guidance as outlined in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment: Third Edition (GLVIA3 published in 2013), this guidance is supplemented by 'Notes and Clarifications' guidance Landscape Institute LITGN-2024-01 (published in 2024).

In summary, the GVLIA3 states:-

"Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), is a tool used to identify and assess the effects of and significance of, change resulting from development on both landscape (as an environmental resource in its own right) and on people's views and visual amenity"

Impact assessment involves consideration of the nature of the proposed change or development;

describing the existing (baseline) landscape, the views and the visual amenity in the area that may be affected; predicting the effects and then considering how these effects might be mitigated. As an EIA assessment the study includes judgements on the significance of the predicted effects to assist final decision making on the proposals.

As the title of the process suggests there are two components:-

Appraisal of landscape effects; assessing effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right; and

Appraisal of visual effects; assessing effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people.

This assessment process deals with many different types of Landscape and often Townscape. The definition of 'landscape' by the European Landscape Convention (ELC), adopted by the UK since 2002, is inclusive:

'...this Convention ...covers natural, rural, urban and peri-urban areas. It concerns landscapes that might be considered outstanding as well as every day or degraded landscapes.'

The guidance highlights the need to take a comprehensive view of landscapes. Our approach is to consider the many ways in which landscapes may be used, viewed or otherwise valued. Reference to the 'Ecosystem Services' approach to the consideration of landscape is often helpful

The appraisal of effects then identifies in a systematic manner the various ways and relative degrees in which changes in the landscape may occur.

As a general approach our impact assessment is based on professional judgments on the relative sensitivities and susceptibility to change and the scale and nature of the predicted effects. These judgements often draw many different considerations together into one conclusion.

L VIA is often an iterative process in particular the early stages of project screening and scoping require an understanding of the nature of the proposals, and again at the impact assessment stage judgements of sensitivity (which includes consideration of susceptibility) to change from the specific type of development. Mitigation measures may also evolve and for ease of reporting are included in the assessment as embedded (primary) measures.

PROCESS

The assessment provided here is to determine the scope of potential Landscape effects arising from the proposed residential development at White Stree, West Lavington. The assessment reflects the design stage of the project and level of detail that is defined within submissions and where appropriate potential areas of uncertainty. Assessments are expected to reflect a 'cautious worst case scenario' where there may be uncertainty. Wherever practicable assessments reflect clearly defined parameters and detailed drawings submitted for approval. More illustrative supporting information may be referred to where this clearly accords with the fixed parameters, where assessments rely on illustrative or design intent information this is noted.

As noted the assessment is based on a range of professional judgments rather than fixed templates for appraisal. As the process involves a degree of subjective analysis external sources of information such as local landscape character assessments and input from the planning authority.

The guidance provided in GLVIA3 advocates the consideration of landscape and visual effects as separate, albeit related issues. Landscape is considered in terms of a resource which may have intrinsic value and / or how it may be appreciated for reasons other than its appearance in a view.

The approach taken for assessing the landscape is to consider the wider contextual position of the site before a descriptive analysis of the local physical landscape. This is followed with review of existing landscape character studies and assessment of how the site character relates to these. Landscape character includes reference to characteristic features and the aspects of 'experiential qualities' that may be important or sensitive to change. Experiential qualities include perceptions (often subjective) such as scale and openness, tranquillity, scenic beauty, unspoilt-ness, wildness or naturalness.

The consideration of access, use and interest covers the aspects of more human interaction that may be present. Public access for either active travel or recreational use is mapped and existing levels of use reviewed on the ground. Recreational use may be via public rights of way, open access land or public open space. Accessibility to existing access networks, points or settlement patterns may be important in terms of established routeways or networks of accessible routes and how an area may function for either regular public enjoyment or as part of a wider tourism offer.

Alongside access the assessment considers the scope for any additional interest in the landscape arising from tangible connections with nature or wildlife, historic or cultural heritage (these aspects may overlap with more technical ecology and heritage assessments; consideration here is in relation to identification of the more tangible aspects that do or could add interest to the general appreciation of a landscape). In some locations areas may provide social functions such as event, gathering or play spaces or may form part of identified Green Infrastructure and / or contribute to sustainable objectives such as flood protection and local food production. The role of open green space and restorative environments for health and wellbeing may fall within the recreational access or GI aspects.

These aspects may be drawn in as aspects of existing value or may be noticeably absent. As with all the above landscape aspects, they may be relevant as potential positive outcomes of development change.

Consideration of importance of each of the above aspects may be for intrinsic value (i.e. irrespective of public views or appreciation) and / or because something may contribute to the wider perceptions of character or appreciations of combined value. There is likely to be enhanced value for aspects that are evidently of intrinsic value and are openly or extensively enjoyed by current users.

The **sensitivity** of the different aspects of the landscape is then considered. This combines judgements of value or interest and the broad **susceptibility** to impact (direct or indirect) that may arise from the type of development proposed.

Sensitivity judgements are primarily a consideration of importance or value, but the inclusion of **susceptibility** considerations may temper the level of sensitivity.

Clearly broad scale direct impact of a development may simply result in the loss of an area or aspect of value (most environments would obviously be 'susceptible' to such impact) thus sensitivity would be related to contemplating the simple value of that aspect if lost as a whole. More subtle scale / indirect change may still be intrusive or diminish an aspect without wholesale change. Consideration of susceptibility in this respect is more related to how sensitive an aspect may be to being diminished by more indirect or subtle potential changes arising from the type of development proposed. Eg a landscape described as unspoilt rural landscape may be inherently more susceptible to a small scale-built intrusion than a more urbanised setting, so this is factored into the judgement on sensitivity.

The approach for visual appraisal is to assess the effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people. The nature of the visual amenity is recorded at public vantage points and where possible adjacent to residential properties which may have views of the site (alternatively this may be assessed viewing out from the site areas). Consideration is given to the existing condition of views in terms of distance, extent of landscape in view (both the overall view and extent of site area(s)), scenic quality and intrusions, the nature of viewpoint and broad relative estimates of likely numbers of viewers.

The duration of a view along a route or frequency or repressiveness of viewpoints needs to be considered. Single glimpsed views may be the single opportunity to appreciate a wider landscape or a fleeting glimpse in an otherwise visually rich setting. Views are noted as either representative of several similar views or as the only locations from which specific views are gained.

Judgements on the sensitivity of views would factor in the setting of viewpoints and as locations that may be visited specifically to enjoy a view, designated landscapes or townscape and general recreational locations or more day to day locations where views may be an incidental experience.

Internal and close quarter views of a site may have direct bearing on the perception of character as well as visual amenity. Development may also result in the loss or degradation of an attractive view out to a wider landscape.

EVALUATION

As a conclusion to the baseline analysis the aspects are drawn together into a short summary or evaluation of the landscape and visual condition. This would generally provide an overview of the combined landscape resource and general visual amenity. Where the relative importance or sensitivity of different site areas is noted, this would be highlighted.

The value of the landscape (and visual environment) can apply to the whole of an area and to the individual areas and different elements (and key views). A starting point will be existing designations but areas of undesignated landscape may well have value as may individual elements such as trees, hedgerows or buildings.

As part of the overview consideration of the status of the site relative to the NPPF 'Valued Landscape' reference is considered.

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL BASELINE – SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The landscape baseline assessment is based on a combination of the following:

- Desktop review – including existing information such as maps plans and open source GIS data, as well as background information relating to landscape designation, classification and character appraisals, development constraints (tree preservation orders, public rights of way, services etc.), landscape heritage (historic plans and maps) and ecological and cultural heritage appraisals, which may be undertaken for other elements of the scheme development.
- Site appraisal fieldwork – to establish landscape features and resources, the character, quality and visibility of the site (visual envelope and important viewpoints into and out of the site); and
- Consultation responses from Pre-Application discussions with local authorities and statutory consultees.
- Reference to the Historic Landscape is also considered an important aspect of the process, where available.

Visual Baseline Studies have been undertaken as follows:

- Desk review – initial review of local topography and long-distance sections and site inspection.
- The extent of potential visibility is established through either site visits and reference to topographic mapping or the use of 3D terrain modelling information (viewshed mapping with virtual markers positioned on site high points to represent the potential height of proposed structures).

Where these initial studies or application site visits suggest the potential to identify the site in many or distant views, consideration is given to the nature of the development and the type of receiving environment to set an appropriate extent of study the area. This process provides a 'Zone of Visual Influence' (ZVI) which helps establish the search area for assessment views. Within this broad area there may be extensive areas of the landscape where no view is possible due to intervening topography, built development, trees and other features.

The identified views are categorised according to the type of viewpoint and the relative sensitivity. Site photographs were taken from representative viewpoints. In areas of extensive visibility or low sensitivity settings this may not be an exhaustive catalogue of every one of the possible views, as only those viewpoints which provide sufficiently open views may be relevant to consideration of effects. Views were selected to be representative of views from a variety of locations, including key public locations, public highways, public footpaths, and where practical private residential properties and sensitive landscapes; the nature of views – whether they are glimpsed or open; the extent of viewpoints (or duration of passing along route) would also be referenced.

Views from residential properties are often taken as potentially the most sensitive. While the number of individuals affected in any one property will be low, such views are fixed and are likely to be of definite interest to those affected. The degree of sensitivity of properties may well vary as some may have limited view while others a more open view from living accommodation or back gardens. While individual properties may be sensitive or highly sensitive to proposed changes, the actual number of properties affected overall will be considered.

The relative sensitivity of all views identified is based on judgements on the nature of the viewpoint, the quality of the view and the susceptibility to impacts from the type of change proposed. Views from public open spaces, footpaths, historic buildings or important areas of landscape and townscape, are considered as generally more sensitive than views from main roads or commercial developments.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The impact assessment stage examines the effects of the development on the landscape (as a resource) and visual amenity following the same aspects as set out in the baseline appraisal. The degrees of effect are assessed based on judgements of the sensitivity, magnitude and duration changes.

Starting with the physical landscape, the basic quantifiable changes along with the change to any specific features of intrinsic value are identified.

The effects on landscape **and townscape** character are assessed through consideration of the changes (both negative and positive) to the landscape in terms of changes to characteristic physical features and the potential changes to the perceptions of the place. Changes to the accessibility, function for recreational use and as a setting for heritage, natural, cultural and social interest are also assessed and described.

Visual effects are assessed by determining the degree to which the new development would affect the different viewpoints; with reference to the people who would be affected by changes in views or visual amenity at different places. For each view the change is considered against the visual baseline conditions and how effectively the development may be integrated. The scale of change is considered alongside the degree to which proposals may be perceived in context or inherently intrusive or even beneficial to the view. These appraisals include a degree of subjective but professional judgement.

The analysis is presented as a series of selected viewpoint assessments, but of course in reality the visual perception of any development is more of a moving picture. Moving through a landscape, visibility, perspective and perceptions can change, this is considered in an overview of the visual impact effects. Both parts of the LVIA process cover the effects during construction, at completion and after 15 years (these are often referred to as residual effects as mitigation measures such as planting become established).

MAGNITUDE AND DURATION

As part of the assessment process the nature of the effects is considered in terms of magnitude. This is a judgement in terms of scale, intensity and reversibility or permanence (within meaningful timescales <5-7-10-15 years or so) of the effects. With the wide range of different landscape (and to a lesser extent visual) aspects relevant scales are considered a widely ranging variable.

Scale is judged relative to the geographic extent of how the respective aspect may be located or distributed or locally perceived or appreciated. In respect of the different aspects of landscape studied the judgement may relate to:-

Physical landscapes / features: this may be relative to the scale of landforms or natural features, units of land-use (single fields, whole farms), one of many or one of few trees / hedges / buildings, a large or small portion of a designed landscape or defined building group.

Character areas: a large or small portion of an defined character area or multiple areas, (or designated landscape or Conservation Area)

Access: may be simply related to long or short sections of access routes or the resulting scale of change to a network.

Aspects of Interest: to the scale at which they may be valued or appreciated individual aspects are often likely to be geographically small and may be appreciated as highly protected heritage assets or as very localised elements of interest.

Green Infrastructure: as often an overarching aspect (drawing together / overlapping with other aspects) this may be related to a full site scale or a wider existing or potential network.

As often complex judgements the consideration of magnitude is often helpful to tabulate. Duration of activities such as transitory construction not added here as most likely to be covered by stages of the assessment (construction, completion, 15 yrs.)

Aspect	Size (of the change)	Scale (relative as proportion of baseline)	Intensity	Reversibility Permanence	Magnitude
Context					
Physical Landscape Resources					
Landscape & Townscape Character					
Access and Interest					

Cumulative impacts from other developments are also considered.

As well as the narrative description applied within the body of the assessment, the various assessment are collected into summary table form to allow the stages of the assessment to be followed.

In some situations the final or combined assessments may be considered to have influence on a wider perspective of the local site context. The effects on local context are reviewed with the detailed assessments and consideration of combined (and where appropriate cumulative) effects. With the multi-layered approach to assessing the many different aspects of landscape there is some potential for a degree of overlap in impact assessments or for the different aspects to be seen as combined this is reviewed and discussed within the concluding summary section of the assessment.

DEGREES OF EFFECT

The degrees of effect are then judged in relation to a broad scale as indicated below. Assessments generally range across a five or six point scale. The GLVIA guidance notes that assessments should be consistent across projects, which means the same basic scales are applied to widely different project types and scenarios. In some cases, major developments or infrastructure or destructive mineral extraction industries will be anticipated in highly sensitive locations (often these may be classed as essential projects to meet national or strategic needs). The impact scale below allows for these with substantial and very substantial effects categories. These would be well beyond the range of more localised development projects where Major, Moderate or Minor degrees of residual impact would be the expected range.

As assessments progress effects on different aspects can be differentiated, where one impact may be identified as being marginally greater than another. With this it is often appropriate to determine the degree of effects as sitting between the respective levels allowing for Major-Moderate and Moderate-Minor and Negligible degrees of impact as indicated below. In most situations the assessment range would remain as across a five or six point scale within the overall range indicated.

The table below provides an indication of how the relative sensitivity and magnitude of change can be interpreted into the assessed degrees of effect. In practice the judgements draw together many different considerations that may not neatly fit within fixed matrices. Further considerations such as inherent intrusion or development seen to fit in context, duration and mitigation or how effects may be combined or overlap may influence the assessed degree.

	Magnitude						
Sensitivity	Very High	High	Medium High	Medium	Medium Low	Low	Minimal
Very High	Very Substantial	Substantial	Major	Major Moderate	Moderate	Moderate Low	Low
High	Substantial	Major	Major Moderate	Moderate	Moderate Low	Low	Negligible
Medium High	Major	Major Moderate	Moderate	Moderate Low	Low	Negligible	Negligible
Medium	Major Moderate	Moderate	Moderate Low	Low	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
Medium Low	Moderate	Moderate Low	Low	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
Low	Moderate Low	Low	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
Low Degraded	Low	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

	Likely to relate to strategic developments and / or exceptional settings
	Likely significant effects
	Potential for significant effects subject to judgements on mitigation permanence etc.