
Uplands, West Ashton Road - Trowbridge

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Hills Homes Developments Ltd



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1.0 Introduction & Location

- 1.1

Reckless Orchard was commissioned in February 2026 by Hills Homes Developments Ltd to carry out landscape design work and an LVA for a proposed residential development on the edge of Trowbridge in Wiltshire.
- 1.2

The scope and methodology of the assessment was based on the ‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – Third Edition’ published by The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment in 2013.
- 1.3

The key criteria assessed within this report can be summarised as follows:

(I) . Landscape character: effects on the landscape or townscape which may arise where the character of areas with a particular scenic quality or merit are impacted on by the development.

(II). Landscape features: impacts on landscape features such as hedgerows, trees or landform which may arise where features are lost or substantially modified as a result of the development.

(III). Visual amenity: effects on visual amenity which may arise where features intrude into or obstruct the views of people, or where there is some other qualitative change to the view seen.
- 1.4

The landscape and visual appraisal was carried out through a desk study of relevant documents and by field study work undertaken during March 2026. The purpose of the site visit was to establish:

The content and quality of the site's existing landscape features.

The character of the site and its immediate environs.

The site's visual relationship with its surroundings.

The contribution of the site to the wider landscape.

The people most likely to be affected by changing views resulting from development of the site.

The findings of the Appraisal were fed into the design process and the report was reviewed and finalised in June 2026.

1.5

The site is located on the south-eastern side of Trowbridge at GR ST868574
-
- FIGURE 1 (not to scale)
- June 2026

1

Reckless Orchard

2.0 Site Context

- 2.1 The site is located on the southeastern edge of Trowbridge, off of West Ashton Road. To the north of the site lies Trowbridge Lodge Park, a development of park homes, set in a well treed landscape of mature trees, potentially once an area of woodland. Its southern edge, bounding the proposed development site, provides a strong belt of mature trees and bushes.
- 2.2 The southern boundary of the development site abuts an area of rough grass and scrub, allocated in the Wiltshire Council Local Plan - Planning for Trowbridge, as Employment Land. The site boundary is defined by a timber pale fence, on the outside of which runs a small watercourse called Blackball Brook. Running parallel to the boundary there is also a footpath linking Biss Meadow Country Park with new housing development to the east of the site. This site boundary is also characterised by rows of poplar trees, overgrown hedges and occasional willow trees.
- 2.3 The site narrows at either end, with the western end meeting West Ashton Road and the eastern end abutting a small area of public open space associated with new housing at Serotine Crescent.
- 2.4 Further development areas to the south of Trowbridge are identified within the Local Plan, with residential areas allocated to the southeast of the site, and a large mixed use area to the southwest. These will mean that the development site, currently at the edge of Trowbridge, will ultimately end up being incorporated within the urban mass of the town.
- 2.5 Figure 2 illustrates the position of the site and its relationship to Trowbridge and the surrounding countryside.

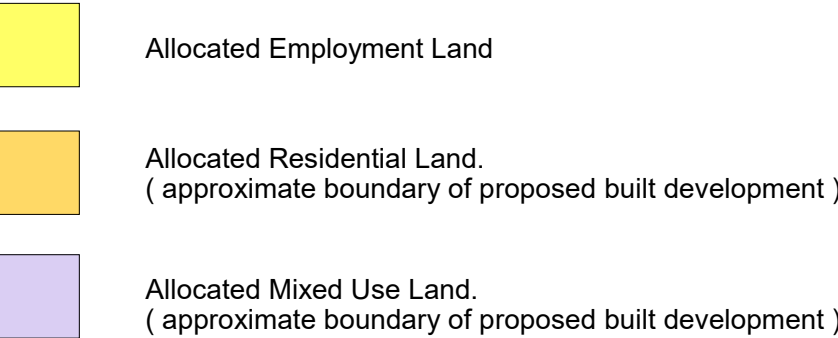


FIGURE 2 (not to scale)



3.0 Existing Site - Character

3.1 The proposed development site is approximately 5.50 hectares in extent and composed of four landscape character areas:

- **Area A - Existing house, drive and garden**

The character of this area is defined by residential and domestic features such as the existing house and surrounding gardens, fences, garages and parking areas. The planting is decorative and the area closely maintained. The area is enclosed on three sides by the mature trees and houses of the adjacent properties and those of Area B.

- **Area B - Open woodland with mown grass**

An area of mature trees, presumably once woodland, but now with a mown grass understorey and resembling dense 'wood pasture' in appearance. The area is enclosed on its eastern side by an overgrown, decorative hedge.

- **Area C - Open grassland**

Area C is an open, irregularly-shaped grassland field, bounded by trees on its northern and southern sides. The existing house and gardens of Area A overlook the western end of this space. The eastern end merges into the more linear space of Area D.

- **Area D - Linear grassland space**

This area is similar to Area C, being part of the same grassland field. Its linear nature, resulting in it being more tightly enclosed by trees and hedges, gives it a slightly different and more tranquil and removed character than the areas further to the west.

3.2 The site has a generally southerly aspect with the highest point being 42.29m AOD close to the northern boundary of the site, and the lowest point being 37.15m AOD towards the southwest corner. Blackball Brook runs outside of and parallel to the southern boundary, flowing east to west. The lowest, southern part of the site is prone to periodic flooding.

3.3 Overall, the site is defined by its slightly sloping landform, the strong belt of fine mature trees adjacent to its northern boundary, and the belt of scrub and semi-mature trees along its southern boundary. These, combined with the trees within Areas A and B, result in an enclosed, almost hidden site with strong boundary features. Grassland pasture is the dominant landuse in terms of scale. The mature and semi-mature trees provide the landscape features of most value.



FIGURE 3 (not to scale)

3.0 Existing Site - Character



3.4 A number of panoramic photographs have been taken across the site to illustrate the existing landscape character, views, and features of the site. These are shown on the following pages. The viewpoint locations are shown on Figure 4 opposite.



FIGURE 4 (not to scale)

3.0 Existing Site



VIEW 1 - View east across Area C from close to the site access at Area A.



VIEW 2 - View north across Area C towards the existing house and gardens of Area A and the mature parkland trees of Area B

3.0 Existing Site



VIEW 3 - View southwest across Area C towards the belt of scrubby trees and line of poplars which form the southern site boundary.



VIEW 4 - View south-eastwards from the edge of Area B, across Area C, with the narrower Area D in the distance.

3.0 Existing Site



VIEW 5 - View northwest from the centre of Area C towards Area B and the northern site boundary. Note the decorative hedging along parts of this boundary.



VIEW 6 - View east from the centre of Area C towards Area D. The northern boundary is defined by a young hawthorn hedge along much of its length in this part of the site.

3.0 Existing Site



VIEW 7 - View northeast across Area D showing the off-site belt of mature trees and the boundary hawthorn hedge which characterise the northern edge of the site.



VIEW 8 - View north-westwards across Area C towards Area B

3.0 Existing Site



VIEW 9 - View west from Area D across Area C.



VIEW 10 - View westwards from the eastern boundary of the site along Area D. The enclosed nature of the site is evident in this view.

4.0 Development Proposals Plan - nts



- 4.1 The proposal is for 40 housing units, comprising a mix of detached, semi-detached and terrace properties. The built development is confined to the northern half of the site due to flooding issues along its lower, southern half, adjacent to Blackball Brook.
- 4.2 The development is accessed off of West Ashton Road, via a spine road, off of which run three shared surface cul-de-sacs. The majority of the housing is located to the north of the spine road, with attenuation basins and a Local Area for Play (LAP) located to the south of the road.
- 4.3 The large southern area is retained as public open space with informal, crushed stone paths providing all-weather access.
- 4.4 The existing property on site is to be demolished but its adjacent area of mature trees is incorporated into the layout.
- 4.5 Two attenuation basins provide wetland habitat as well as their main SUDs function.
- 4.6 The specific landscape proposals are described in Section 8.

FIGURE 5 (not to scale)

5.0 Landscape Appraisal

The Surrounding Area

- 5.1 The proposed development site does not lie within any national or international landscape designations.
- 5.2 The Wiltshire Local Landscape Character Areas report classifies the area south of Trowbridge, within which the development site lies, as ‘Rolling Clay Lowland’. Characterised as ‘a gently undulating, rural landscape underlain by heavy clay soils. Defined by intimate networks of mature hedgerows, rich riparian vegetation, and permanent pastures, it features highly sensitive skylines and is strictly managed to conserve its peaceful, traditional agricultural character’. However, given the edge of town situation of the site, and the marginal urban landscape within which it sits, this essentially rural character classification does not provide an appropriate context in this case.
- 5.3 There are no listed buildings or historic sites close by which would be impacted on by the proposed development.
- 5.4 The areas to the north, east and west of the site are essentially suburban in character. The area to the north being unusual in its widely spaced, park-type properties set in an attractive landscape of mature trees. To the east, new houses and flats currently provide a rather bland character, with a public face of wide roads with grass verges, young street trees and roundabouts. More attractive, smaller scale suburban development lies to the west, bisected by a green off-shoot from the Biss Meadow Country Park.
- 5.5 To the south lies urban fringe land, clothed in rough grass with an attractive covering of scrub beginning to develop.
- 5.6 The quality of the surrounding landscape and townscape is generally assessed as being moderate . The park type development to the north provides a moderate to high quality landscape setting, although the buildings themselves are interesting rather than being attractive or characterful. Both the suburban areas to the east and to the west are undistinguished.
- 5.7 The visually enclosed nature of the site, and the limited extent of the built development on the site itself, will result in minimal effects on the character and quality of the surrounding landscapes.

The Site

- 5.8 **Landscape Features:** The key landscape features of significance on the site are:
 - The mature trees and overgrown hedges around the boundaries.
 - The lines of semi-mature poplars along the southern and western boundaries.
 - The copse of mature trees set within mown grass adjacent to the northern boundary.
 - The relatively young hawthorn hedge along part of the northern boundary.
- 5.9 The proposed site layout seeks to retain as many of the key landscape features as possible. The boundary trees will be retained, with the exception of a handful of poplars on the western boundary that will need to be removed to allow the access road to link with West Ashton Road. The boundary hedges will be retained, although the invasive cherry laurel bushes will be removed.
- 5.10 The large group of mature trees that abutted the original house and garden on its eastern side will be retained and incorporated into the layout.
- 5.11 A number of individual trees, associated with the garden of the previous house, and identified as Class B will need to be removed.
- 5.12 New landscape features will be created on site as part of the planting scheme these will include:
 - 225 linear metres of new native species hedging.
 - 3,175 square metres of native woodland planting.
 - 59 No native specimen trees.
- 5.13 **Landscape Character:** The existing character of the site is predominantly one of a grazed or mown paddock enclosed by strong belts of trees and hedges. The existing house and garden, although overlooking the field, read as an extension of the adjacent suburban area.
- 5.14 Set away from main roads, and with limited visibility out to the surrounding areas, the site has a tranquil and slightly secluded feel to it. The quality of the site landscape is assessed as being moderate to high. The site is well managed.
- 5.15 The proposed development will inevitably change the character of the actual site from agricultural pasture and mature ‘suburban garden’ to suburban, village housing with associated public open space or parkland. The significant boundary vegetation will limit the degree to which the development affects the immediate landscape characters surrounding the site.
- 5.16 Half of the site will remain open grassland with occasional groupings of native specimen trees, and individual trees such as sweet chestnut and beech in timber guards. This will give a country estate, parkland type character to these areas.
- 5.17 Although the overall character of the site will alter, the quality of the landscape will remain moderate to high.

6.0 Local Viewpoints

- 6.1 Views towards the site are restricted in the north and west by the existing built development. The strong belt of mature trees and hedges all along the northern boundary limits views from Lodge Court.
- 6.2 Overgrown hedges along West Ashton Road, together with the trees and bushes along the southern boundary of the site restrict views from West Ashton Road and the residential area to the west.
- 6.3 Filtered views into the site are possible from the footpath running along the outside of the southern site boundary.
- 6.4 Middle distance views are potentially obtainable from Leap Gate and the Public Open Space near Serotine Crescent.
- 6.5 To illustrate the degrees of visibility a number of typical viewpoints were chosen and photographs taken from those locations. Figure 6 shows the location of those viewpoints and the relevant views are reproduced on the following pages. Views could only be taken from public vantage points.



FIGURE 6 (not to scale)

6.0 Distant Viewpoints

- 6.6 The proposed development site has a southerly aspect and the housing is limited to its higher, northern portion. As a result there are potential views of the site from higher ground to the south.
- 6.7 Approximately 1.75 kilometres to the south the land rises to 75m AOD in the vicinity of West Ashton, and wide views can be gained northwards towards Trowbridge.
- 6.8 Properties along the northwestern edge of the village, together with users of the A350 have a wide vista which takes in the proposed development site.
- 6.9 Viewpoint L, shown on page 25, illustrates a typical view from these locations.



FIGURE 7 (not to scale)

7.0 Visual Appraisal

Approximate linear extent of
proposed development site



Viewpoint A

7.1 View from West Ashton Road looking south .
GR ST 86621 57413

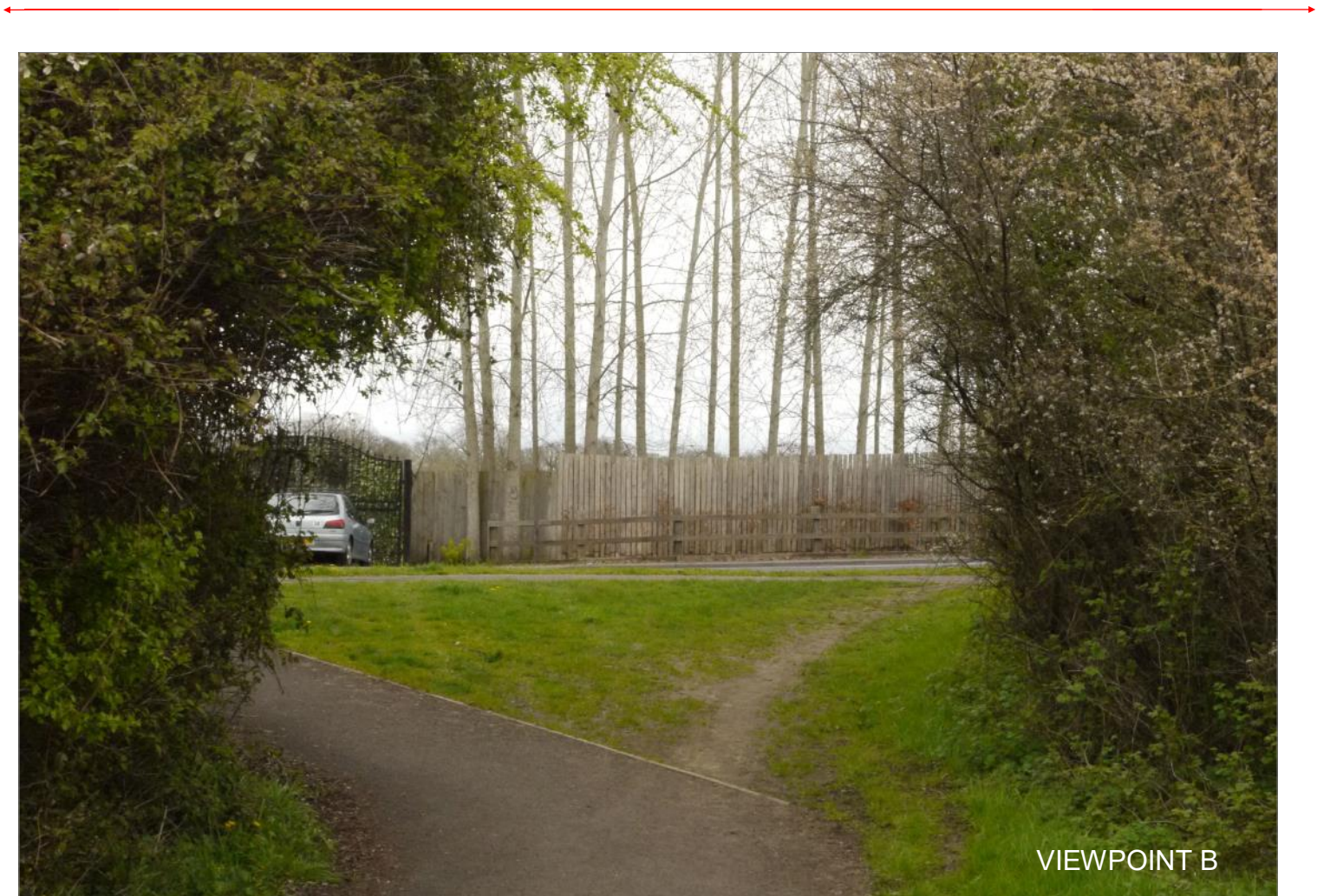
This view is dominated by the main road in the foreground, and by the rows of poplar trees in the centre of the view. The decorative gates of the existing on-site house, together with the high timber fence beyond, reflect the suburban character of the area. The quality of the view is gauged as being moderate to poor

7.2 The new bell-mouth for the access road into the site will be clearly visible from this viewpoint. Views into the site will be opened up but the new houses will not be visible.

7.3 Distance from viewpoint to site boundary - 35 metres.

7.0 Visual Appraisal

Approximate linear extent of
proposed development site



Viewpoint B

- 7.4

View from the cycleway and footpath route from Biss Meadow Country Park.
GR ST 86625 57363
- A narrow vista between hedges provides an uninspiring view of the site boundary beyond West Ashton Road. The visual clutter of metal gates and two styles of timber fencing dominates the scene, alleviated to a degree by the strong vertical trunks of the poplar trees just inside the boundary.
- 7.5

The site development will form the focal point to this view. The edge of the new access road will be visible to the left-hand side. Views into the site maybe visible depending on the final boundary treatment. The removal of the existing fencing would be beneficial to the quality of the view.
- 7.6

Distance from viewpoint to site boundary - 40 metres

7.0 Visual Appraisal

Approximate linear extent of
proposed development. site



Viewpoint C

7.7 View from the West Ashton Road looking north. GR ST 86711 57297

The main road and its associated pavements, fences and lighting, together with the houses in the distance and the garden hedges, give a suburban character to this view. The formal lines of poplar trees dominate the middle distance, while the mature trees and overgrown hedges also help provide a strong green setting.

7.8 The access to the site off of West Ashton Road will be visible in this view but will have a minimal effect on the character or quality of the view. The new houses will be hidden by the roadside hedge and boundary vegetation.

7.9 Distance from viewpoint to site boundary - 60 metres.

7.0 Visual Appraisal

Approximate linear extent of
proposed development site



Viewpoint D

7.10 View from West Ashton Road looking north. GR ST 86694 57326

The main road and its associated pavements and lighting, together with the houses in the distance and the garden hedges, give a suburban character to this view. The overgrown roadside hedge, together with the formal lines of poplar trees provide a green backdrop to the scene.

7.11 The access to the site off of West Ashton Road will be visible in the middle distance but will have a minimal effect on the character or quality of the view. The new houses will be hidden by the roadside hedge and boundary vegetation.

7.12 Distance from viewpoint to site boundary - 35 metres.

7.0 Visual Appraisal

Approximate linear extent of
proposed development. site



Viewpoint E

7.13 View into site from footpath along Blackball Brook. GR ST 86769 57348

Running parallel to the southern site boundary, this footpath provides glimpsed winter views through the boundary vegetation into the existing open field of the site. This view is dominated by the greenery of the boundary, including the line of poplar trees. The character of the view , and of the path as a whole, is one of a green corridor through an urban-edge landscape. This character will be even more reinforced should the land to the south be developed as employment land as shown on the zoning plan for the area.

7.14 The new housing will be visible in the middle distance through the boundary hedge during the winter months. Once the leaves are on the trees and bushes these views will be screened. Additional woodland planting is proposed along the inside of this boundary. This will not only provide additional habitat but will further screen views of the new development from this footpath.

7.15 Distance from viewpoint to site boundary - 15 metres.

7.0 Visual Appraisal

Approximate linear extent of
proposed development. site



Viewpoint F

7.16 View of the southern site boundary from the adjacent footpath. GR ST 87159 57344

As with viewpoint E further west, the boundary vegetation along the southern side of the site dominates the view from this location and restricts any views towards the proposed development.

7.17 The new housing may just be visible in the distance through the winter branches but will have a minimal effect on the character or quality of the view.

7.18 Distance from viewpoint to site boundary - 15 metres.

7.0 Visual Appraisal

Approximate linear extent of
proposed development. site



Viewpoint G

7.19 View towards the site from the end of Serotine Crescent GR ST 87239 57409

This view, across a newly created area of public open space and towards the site, is almost rural in nature. The nearby housing and roads dilutes that feeling but doesn't detract from the attractiveness of this particular scene.

7.20 The development site is visible through the branches, although when all the leaves are on the trees this will be reduced significantly. Although the red line boundary is only 60 metres away, the nearest new house will be approximately 210m away. Seen through the boundary vegetation, with the strong backdrop of the existing mature trees to the north, and with additional tree planting maturing on site, the new housing will have a minimal impact on the view.

7.21 Distance from viewpoint to site boundary - 60 metres.

7.0 Visual Appraisal

Approximate linear extent of
proposed development. site



Viewpoint H

7.22 View from the Public Open Space adjacent to Serotine Crescent. GR ST 87285 57359

An attractive view across a recently constructed attenuation pond and public open space with a well treed landscape forming a green back drop. The view appears almost rural, although the adjacent housing and busy new road behind the viewer substantially dilutes this feeling.

7.23 The site of the proposed housing can be seen in the distance through a gap in the boundary vegetation. The nearest house will be approximately 250m away. The glimpsed view of the new housing will be seen against a strong skyline of mature trees. New tree planting will also help to screen views. The resulting effect on this viewpoint will be minimal.

7.24 Distance from viewpoint to site boundary - 100 metres.

7.0 Visual Appraisal

Approximate linear extent of
proposed development. site



Viewpoint I

7.25 View from B3105 Leap Gate at Blackball Brook bridge GR ST 87226 57276

This view is dominated by scrubby bushes and rough grassland, with a strong backdrop and skyline of mature trees. Despite the minimal amount of built development in the view the character is of urban edge, marginal land. This is strongly reinforced by the new link road behind the viewer, and the nascent access bell-mouths into potential future developments.

7.26 The roofs of the proposed housing may just be visible through any low points in the intervening trees and bushes but the impact on the view will be negligible. Potential future development on the site in the foreground will obviously change the character of the overall view.

7.27 Distance from viewpoint to site boundary - 105 metre

7.0 Visual Appraisal

Approximate linear extent of
proposed development. site



Viewpoint J

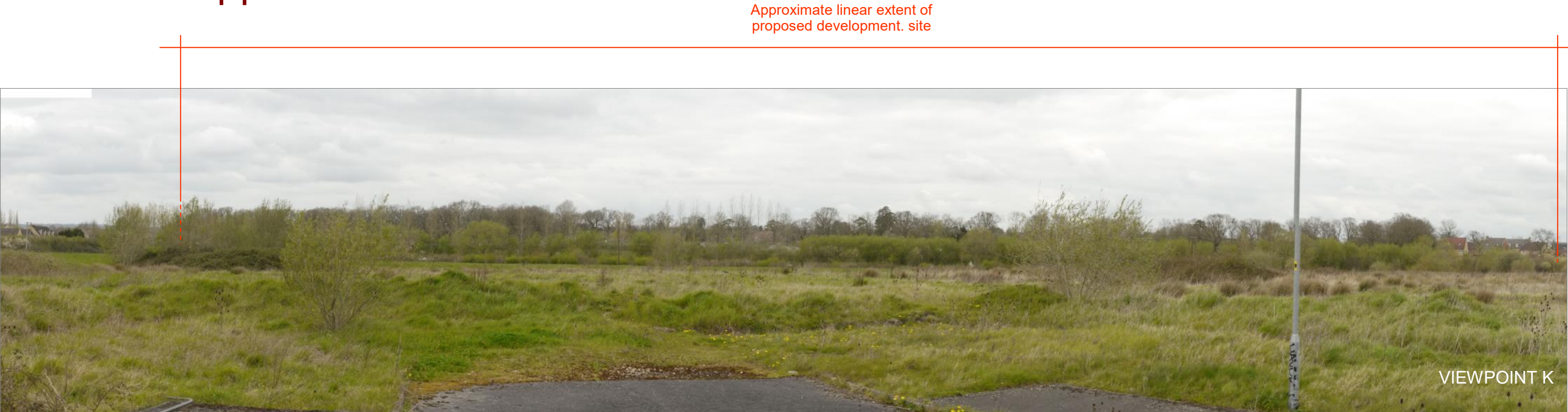
7.28 View from the B3105 Leap Gate road. GR ST 87138 57177

This view, currently characterised by the strong skyline of mature trees and the scrubby land in the foreground, can be seen obliquely by traffic on Leap Gate, and more extensively by any pedestrians or cyclists on the adjacent footpath. The houses of Lodge Court can just be seen in the far distance between the trees.

7.29 The new housing will also just be visible in places, over the tops of the site boundary vegetation. The distance away of the new development, combined with the limited extent of any views, will result in the new housing have a minimal impact on this view. Should the intervening land be developed as employment land, as shown on the zoning plan, then there will likely be no views of the new housing from this location.

7.30 Distance from viewpoint to site boundary - 205 metres.

7.0 Visual Appraisal



Viewpoint K

7.31 View from the footpath alongside the B3105 Leap Gate road. GR ST 87025 57072

This view, currently characterised by the strong skyline of mature trees and the scrubby land in the foreground, can be seen obliquely by traffic on Leap Gate, and more extensively by any pedestrians or cyclists on the adjacent footpath. The houses of Lodge Court can just be seen in the far distance between the trees. A bell-mouth for potential access to new developments can be seen at the bottom of the photograph.

7.32 Parts of the proposed housing development will be visible between the intervening trees - particularly in winter. The distance away of the new development, and the limited extent of the views will result in the development having a minimal effect on the view. Should the intervening land be developed as employment land, as shown on the zoning plan, then there will likely be no views of the new housing from this location.

7.33 Distance from viewpoint to site boundary - 310 metres.

7.0 Visual Appraisal



Viewpoint L

7.34 View from the A350 Yambrook Road close to West Ashton village. GR ST 87666 55771

An expansive view towards Trowbridge from the high ground on the outskirts of the village of West Ashton. The foreground is characterised by geometric fields with variable quality field hedges, pylons, farm buildings and areas of woodland. Trowbridge is visible stretching across the middle to far distance, with high ground rising to a skyline beyond. The view is of medium quality with no outstanding features of note.

7.35 The proposed development site is visible in the middle distance and the new housing will be visible within the view, particularly in the winter. The distance from the viewpoint to the site is such that the new buildings will take up a tiny fraction of the wider view and will be barely noticeable within the context of the surrounding urban fringe

7.36 Distance from viewpoint to site boundary - 1.68 kilometres.

7.0 Visual Appraisal - Summary

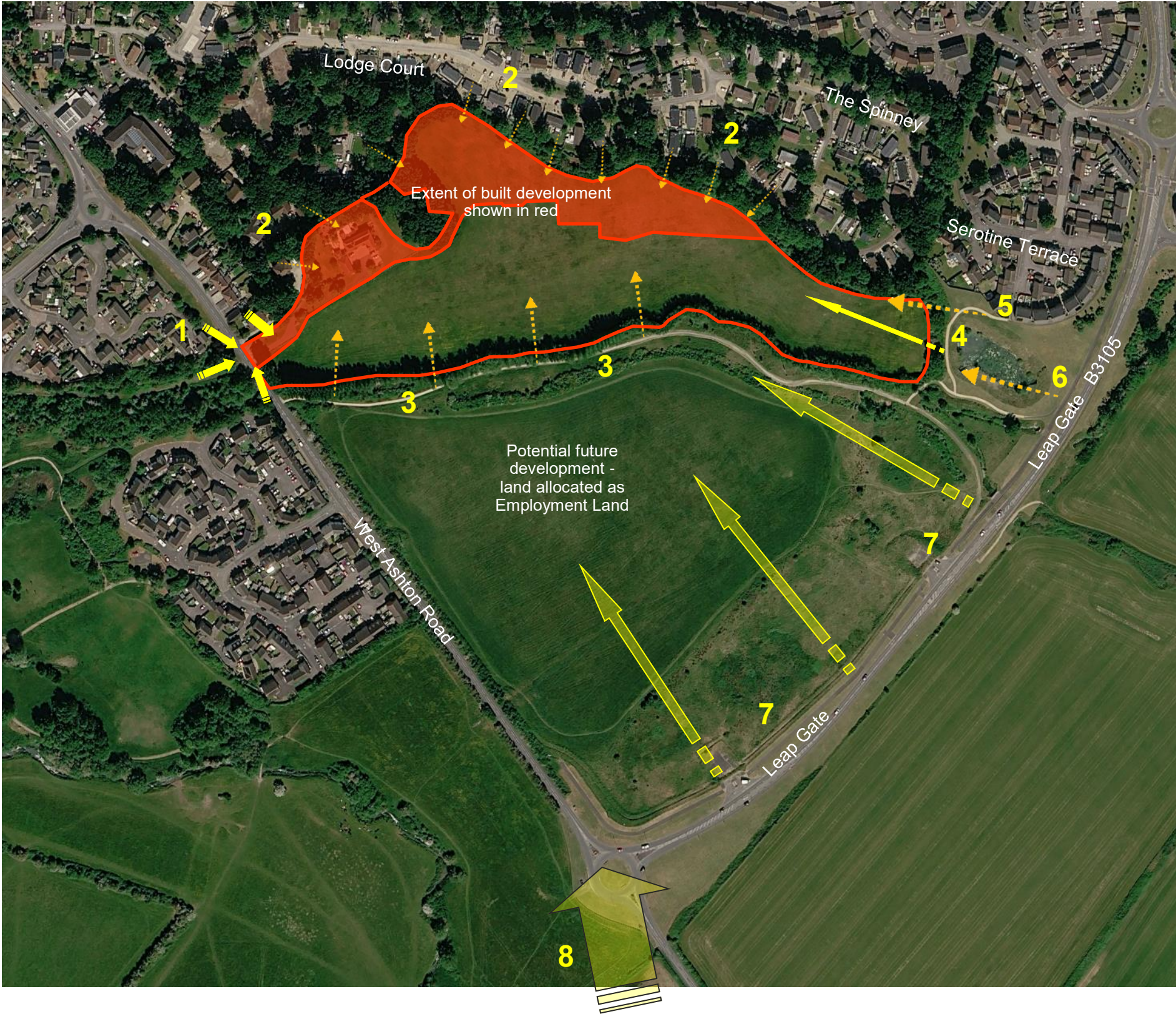


7.37 The enclosed nature of the proposed development site is illustrated by the site photographs and descriptions in Section 3. The potential views of the proposed development from outside of the site have been investigated and typical views illustrated and commented on through the previous pages.

7.38 Figure 8 aims to summarise the findings of the visual appraisal. The various types of views are described below:

- 1 Close range views of the site entrance from West Ashton Road and the nearby properties. These are uninterrupted but limited in extent. The new houses may be visible from some locations looking directly up the access road
- 2 Filtered views of the new housing from the properties along the southern side of Lodge Court through dense bushes and mature trees. Winter views will be partially screened by the dense tracery of branches. Summer views will be substantially screened. The existing site boundary hedges will be retained.
- 3 Filtered views through the boundary vegetation from the footpath running parallel to the site boundary. These views are limited and additional woodland planting along the boundary will further screen the new houses.
- 4 Narrow framed view towards the new housing from the footpath nearest the site boundary in the new public open space.
- 5 & 6 Partially obscured views towards the new development from the public open space in front of Serotine Terrace. The slightly elevated positions allow views over the existing boundary hedges in places. New tree planting on site, and the distance to the actual built development will help mitigate effects on these views.
- 7 Views towards the development site from Leap Gate (B3105). The new housing will be visible through the winter trees. With a strong treed background and seen in the context of the adjoining housing the impact will be minimal. Should development of the intervening land occur then these views and the character of the location will alter significantly.
- 8 Long distance, panoramic views towards the site from the high ground near West Ashton over 1.50 kilometres away. The distance to the site, and the expansive nature of the panorama will result in the new housing having a barely noticeable effect on the views.

FIGURE 8 (not to scale)



8.0 Landscape Proposals & Mitigation - Plan nts



See next page for drawing key and description of proposals

FIGURE 9 (not to scale)

8.0 Landscape Proposals & Mitigation -

- 8.1 The soft landscape proposals are shown on Figure 8 on the previous page. The landscape design seeks to provide a convivial setting for peoples' homes whilst visually settling the new houses into their site and the surrounding landscape. The landscape context and setting; its relationship to the adjacent housing and main road; together with the ecological mitigation requirements and retention of the best quality trees, have all been key drivers in the development of the landscape scheme.
- 8.2 The key landscape elements included:
 - The strengthening of the southern boundary through the provision of new woodland planting to increase its screening effect and also provide a more substantial wildlife corridor,
 - The retention of the group of mature trees adjacent to the northern boundary to form a key visual element within the scheme, helping to break up the massing of the houses and settle the development more successfully into the landscape.
 - The planting of new native specimen trees to help off-set the loss of trees due to the requirements of the new access road and a viable housing layout.
 - The planting of new native species hedges to compensate for the loss of scrub and garden bushes, and to help screen the back fences of gardens.
 - The creation of a large area of public open space along the lower, southern side of the site, retaining the existing grassland and providing suitably low-key, circular hoggin path routes to enable year-round enjoyment of this element of the site.
 - The planting of new native tree groups within the public open space to the southern side of the site to break up views of the houses from within the site, create subtly different areas for informal recreation, and also to provide additional screening to the already filtered views from the south and east.
 - The use of specimen trees with timber guards to create a country estate feel to the site entrance road.
 - The inclusion of street trees wherever possible to help soften the hard nature of the parking courts and roads.
 - The provision of planted front gardens to soften the street scenes, create areas of defensible space, and emphasise the village character of the development.
 - The provision of a LAP (Local Area for Play).
 - The inclusion of a mini-orchard.

Legend	
	Existing trees & hedges
	Woodland planting (native trees & shrubs)
	Native hedge planting (native shrubs)
	Single species hedge planting (decorative or native shrubs)
	Front garden planting (decorative shrubs & herbaceous)
	Specimen trees (native & decorative)
	Parkland trees with timber guards (native & decorative)
	Native specimen trees (native clear stem & multi-stem)
	Pollarded willows (native)
	Front garden trees (decorative)
	Garden lawns
	Incidental shrub planting (decorative shrubs & groundcover)
	Mown grass (grass mix or flowering lawn mix)
	Meadow seeding or retained grassland (grass and wildflower mix)
	Meadow seeding - Detention Basin (grass and wildflower mix)
	Back garden trees (decorative)
	Orchard trees

9.0 Conclusion

- 9.1 The proposed development site lies on the southeastern edge of Trowbridge, adjacent to West Ashton Road, and is surrounded on three sides by suburban development. Immediately to the south of the site lies an area of rough grass and scrub, allocated as employment land. Further to the south and southwest large areas, currently farm land, are zoned for residential and mixed use development within the Local Plan.
- 9.2 The proposed development site does not lie within any internationally or nationally designated landscape areas. The Wiltshire Local Landscape Character Areas report classifies the area south of Trowbridge, within which the development site lies, as 'Rolling Clay Lowland'. This is essentially a rural classification and provides little context to this particular site.
- 9.3 There are no listed buildings or historic sites associated with, or in the vicinity of, the development site.
- 9.4 There are no public rights of way across the site. A footpath runs parallel to the southern site boundary, separated from the site by overgrown bushes, willow trees and lines of semi-mature poplars. A timber palisade fence and a small watercourse - Blackball Brook - also lies between the site and the footpath. This footpath route provides a link between Biss Meadow Country Park, to the west of West Ashton Road, and new residential development east of the development site.
- 9.5 The site is approximately 5.5 hectares and comprises a large grass field and the mature gardens, house and outbuildings of Upland House. A group of mature trees forms a substantial landscape feature to the east of the house. The site has a slight southerly aspect and slopes at approximately 1 in 25 north to south.
- 9.6 The site is strongly enclosed on all sides by trees and overgrown hedges. Set away from main roads, and with limited visibility out to the surrounding areas, the site has a tranquil and slightly secluded feel to it. The quality of the site landscape is assessed as being moderate to high. The site is currently well managed.
- 9.7 The significant landscape features of the site are the belt of mature trees bounding the northern edge and located off-site; the group of mature trees adjacent to the northern boundary and east of Uplands House; and the trees and bushes lining the southern, eastern and western boundaries.
- 9.8 The site is visually well enclosed by trees and hedges. Filtered views through winter branches are possible from the properties immediately to the north and from the footpath to the south. Summer views are likely to be considerably restricted. Partial, glimpsed views into the site will be possible from West Ashton Road where the new access road will be formed. Limited views are likely to be possible from a small number of properties immediately to the east of the site. The concentration of the new houses within the northern and western part of the development site will limit the impact on these latter viewpoints.
- 9.9 Oblique views towards the site are possible from the B3105 Leap Gate to the south of the site. Should development occur on the intervening land, currently allocated as employment land, then these views and their context will be significantly altered.
- 9.10 Long distance views towards the site are possible from the high ground near West Ashton, some 1.50 kilometres to the south. The distances involved, together with the expansive nature of the views and the backdrop of Trowbridge will result in any residential development on the site having a negligible effect on the overall character and quality of the views.
- 9.11 The existing mature trees and hedges around the boundary of the site will be retained, bar the removal of a handful of poplars to accommodate the new access road. The clump of mature trees adjacent to the northern boundary will be retained and integrated into the housing layout. The southern boundary will be strengthened by the inclusion of a belt of new woodland planting.
- 9.12 The built development will be restricted to the northern portion of the site due to potential flooding issues along the lower southern part of the site. The resulting area of green space, running along the whole length of the site, will not only provide a significant amenity resource and an opportunity for habitat creation and improvement, but also extend the strategic green corridor eastwards from the Biss Meadow Country Park.
- 9.13 The planting of new specimen trees within areas of open space, in the core of the development, and along streets, will provide landscape features of a scale to complement and soften the built fabric of the design. New native species hedges will soften the junction between the new housing and the retained green space.
- 9.14 The character, density and layout of the houses has been carefully considered to fit well within the grain of the surrounding suburban townscape.
- 9.15 In conclusion, this report finds that the limited views of the site, its strong visual enclosure and the added mitigatory woodland, hedge and tree planting; together with the carefully considered design of the housing and landscape treatments, results in a scheme that will have a minimal effect on the landscape character and views of the surrounding area and a negligible effect on any long distance views. In addition, the proposed expansion of Trowbridge southwards will see the site, currently on the edge of the town, subsumed deep within its urban fabric.

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