

Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA)

Prepared by: Arthian Ltd

For: Howarth Homes Ltd

Site: Codicote Road, AL6 9TU

Date: 20/07/2026

Document Ref: 321775

Issue-1.0

www.arthian.com

Quality Assurance

Issue Record

Revision	Description	Date	Author	Reviewer	Approver
0.1	Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA)	05/07/2026	IS	IS	AC
1.0	Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) - Final	30/07/2026	IS	JH	AC

Contents

1. Introduction	5
1.1 Instruction.....	5
1.2 Location	5
1.3 The Proposed Development (Description of Development).....	6
1.4 Mitigation Measures.....	6
1.5 Outline Methodology and Approach	6
2. Baseline Situation - Landscape Aspects	9
2.1 Landscape Policy.....	9
2.2 Landscape Designations.....	17
2.3 Registered Battlefields.....	17
2.4 Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments and Conservation Areas	18
2.5 Historic Land-use and Cover	18
2.6 Rights of Way and Open Access Land	18
2.7 National Cycle Network	19
2.8 Ancient Woodlands	20
2.9 Registered Parks and Gardens	20
2.10 Local Roads/Transport Routes	20
2.11 Water Courses and Water Bodies	20
2.12 Ecological Conservation	20
2.13 Landscape Character	20
2.14 Landscape Value	27
3. Baseline Situation - Visual Aspects	28
3.1 Introduction	28
3.2 Visibility	28
3.3 Viewpoints	30
4. Landscape and Visual Assessment	32
4.1 Assumptions and Limitations	32
4.2 Assessment of Landscape Effects	32
4.3 Effects on Visual Amenity.....	35
5. Conclusions	44
5.1 Landscape and Visual Effects	44
6. References	46
7. Abbreviations/Acronyms:	47
8. Glossary:.....	48



Tables

Table 1: Representative Viewpoint (VPs) - Distances are from the VP location to the Site boundary..... 31

Table 2: Summary of Assessed Landscape Impact Significance 35

Table 3: Summary Visual Sensitivity of Receptors at Viewpoints (VPs)..... 36

Table 4: Visual Effects on Viewpoints 1 and 2 37

Table 5: Visual Effects on Viewpoint 3..... 38

Table 6: Visual Effects on Viewpoint 4..... 38

Table 7: Visual Effects on Viewpoint 5..... 39

Table 8: Visual Effects on Viewpoint 6 and 7 40

Table 9: Visual Effects on Viewpoint 8..... 41

Table 10: Summary of Assessed Visual Impact 42

Appendices

Appendix A: Methodology..... 52

Appendix B: Figures 53

1. Introduction

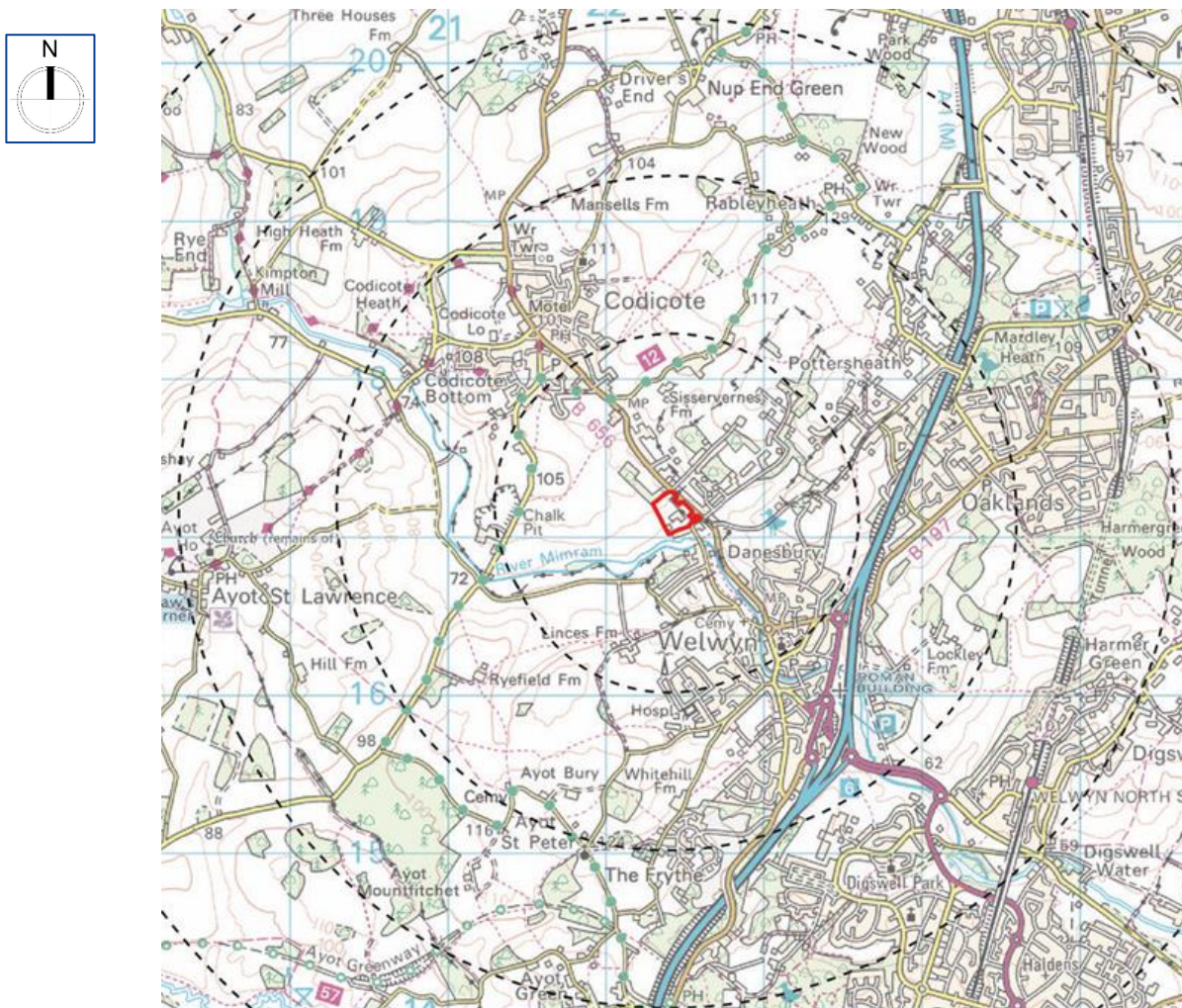
1.1 Instruction

- 1.1.1 Arthian Ltd., a multi-disciplinary consultancy employing a number of experienced and Chartered Landscape Architects, were commissioned by Howarth Homes Limited, the ‘**Applicant**’, to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) of proposals for a residential development (‘**Proposed Development**’), as summarised in section 1.3, on land off Codicote Road, AL6 9TU (‘**Site**’) to accompany an application for full planning permission.

1.2 Location

- 1.2.1 The Site is within the administrative boundaries of North Hertfordshire District Council and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, covering an area of approximately 4.1 hectares (ha).
- 1.2.2 The Site’s location is marked on Plate 1 (and at Figure 1, Appendix B) with a detailed plan of the Proposed Development included in the accompanying planning application.

Plate 1: Showing Site Location



1.3 The Proposed Development (Description of Development)

- 1.3.1 The proposed development comprises the construction of up to 109 residential dwellings, incorporating a balanced mix of semi-detached properties, and detached houses. The dwellings will be constructed to a maximum ridge height of approximately 9.0 metres.
- 1.3.2 The development will be served by an existing access road to the adjacent B656 Codicote Road to the east. The layout has been designed to retain the majority of existing mature trees along its boundaries and within the northern section of the Site, through the inclusion of suitable stand-off distances. The retention and enhancement of existing vegetation to the site's boundaries through new planting is proposed throughout the site to deliver landscape integration, visual screening, and biodiversity enhancements.

1.4 Mitigation Measures

- 1.4.1 A key objective in the design of the Proposed Development is to achieve an appropriate housing density that allows for meaningful integration of planting throughout the Site. This approach aims to help the Proposed Development successfully assimilate into its surroundings and reflect the existing local character. The scheme retains the mature, dense boundary vegetation and incorporates new planting within the Site and on boundaries to reinforce existing landscape features. These measures are intended to strengthen the relationship between the Proposed Development and the wider landscape context, while minimising potential adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity. See Landscaping Plan (321775- Figure L10 "Illustrative Soft Landscape Proposals (Public Open Space)") for further detail.

1.5 Outline Methodology and Approach

- 1.5.1 Arthian have undertaken the following key tasks:
- A review of the planning documentary context for the Site;
 - A desktop study and web search of relevant background documents and maps, including reviews of aerial photographs, North Hertfordshire District Council and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (Local Planning Authority's (LPA's)) publications and other landscape character assessments;
 - Collated information about relevant landscape designations, such as National Parks and National Landscapes;
 - A field assessment of local circumstances, including a photographic survey of the character and fabric of the Site and its surroundings, undertaken by a suitably qualified Landscape Consultant in good weather conditions during May 2026; and
 - An analysis of the likely landscape and visual effects arising from the proposed scheme, including commentary on their nature (positive or negative), magnitude and the sensitivity of the receiving environment.
- 1.5.2 This assessment considers the acceptability of the Proposed Development in the location proposed. It is based on an abbreviated data trawl, and a field visit to identify the most sensitive landscape and visual receptors and considers their ability to accommodate the change proposed.
- 1.5.3 This assessment is conducted with regard to the principles set out in:



- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition (The Landscape Institute, 2013) - referred to as the '**GLVIA**', including clarifications issued by the Landscape Institute.
- An Approach to Landscape Character (Natural England, 2014).
- Landscape Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland (Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, April 2002).
- Landscape Character Assessment - Technical Information Note 08/2015 (The Landscape Institute, February 2016).
- Visual Representation of Development Proposals - Technical Guidance Note 06/19 (The Landscape Institute, September 2019); and
- Tranquillity - An overview - Technical Information Note 01/2017 (Revised) (The Landscape Institute, March 2017).

- 1.5.4 The GLVIA document sets out a range of techniques and approaches which practitioners are advised to use when conducting Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs) and Landscape and Visual Appraisals (LVAs), especially when carried out as part of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) (GLVIA, paragraph 1.4). The intent of the GLVIA is to present a general overview of a 'non-prescriptive' methodology for undertaking assessments of developments: *"It is always the primary responsibility of any landscape professional carrying out an assessment to ensure that the approach and methodology adopted are appropriate to the particular circumstances"* (GLVIA, paragraph 1.20).
- 1.5.5 This assessment accords with the general principles of the GLVIA and is considered appropriately detailed to confidently assess the acceptability of both the principle and details of development in this location.
- 1.5.6 The assessment is undertaken in the context of the landscape being dynamic, as is made clear within the GLVIA (Para 2.13): *"Landscape is not unchanging. Many different pressures have progressively altered familiar landscapes over time and will continue to do so in the future, creating new landscapes. Today many of these drivers of change arise from the requirements for development to meet the needs of a growing and changing population and economy."* This does not mean that any change is acceptable change, but it also means that change in the landscape is likely and that this should be channelled in a managed direction.
- 1.5.7 The nature of landscape and visual appraisal requires both objective analysis and subjective professional judgement. Accordingly, the following assessment is in accordance with the principles of the best practice guidance listed above, information and data analysis techniques and subjective professional judgement where necessary and is based on clearly defined terms in line with best practice guidelines. A glossary is contained at the end of the report and the methodology and method used is in Section 8.
- 1.5.8 A broad area of search for potential viewpoint locations was carried out using specialist digital terrain modelling and analysis software which was used to calculate where the Site was likely to be visible from, based on a height of 9.0m to roof apex, and assumes a 'bare earth' situation (i.e. not considering any topographical features other than landform). The extent of possible views is shown on Figure 2 (Zone of Theoretical Visibility ('**ZTV**') (Bare ground)). The ZTV illustrated is based on a bare earth model up to 5.0km from the Site; it should be interpreted as indicative of a worst-case situation, since it covers



large tracts of the surrounding landscape where the proposals would, in reality, be filtered or screened by intervening elements (e.g. woodlands or buildings).

- 1.5.9 A further ZTV has been provided that in addition to the topography or 'bare-earth' ZTV as described above, also models existing screening elements such as existing woodland, modelled to a height of 12m. The density and thickness of the hedgerows and tree belts surrounding the Site would also prevent or filter views over the winter months to varying degrees, i.e., the degree of visual screening afforded will be dependent on season. The extent of possible views is shown on Figure 3 (Zone of Theoretical Visibility ('**ZTV**') with Indicative Screening.
- 1.5.10 In this assessment, the Study Area extended to 5 km in all directions from the boundary of the Site; predicted to be the likely maximum distance where the Proposed Development could result in potentially discernible or important landscape and visual effects, given the nature of the Proposed Development and the topography and sensitive receptors.
- 1.5.11 Fieldwork was undertaken in May 2026 to further understand the potential for landscape and visual effects. Following fieldwork, it was confirmed that there was very limited visibility in to and out of the Site due to intervening and surrounding visual barriers. As such, the potential for important or notable landscape effects and the likely landscape and visual influence from the development would be limited to locations at close and medium range, further reducing the study area and focus of the assessment.
- 1.5.12 Using professional judgement, Landscape Characteristics have been initially assessed for potential sensitivity to change and a decision made as to whether individual characteristics can be scoped-out of further assessment. Where not scoped-out, assessment of these characteristics is undertaken in further detail, on the basis of the level of effects on these characteristics potentially being a material consideration and presented as part of the assessment. Assessment of effects on Landscape Character is undertaken separately, considering all landscape characteristics, including those scoped-out of individual assessment.

Supporting Figures

- 1.5.13 This LVA is supported by and should be read in conjunction with various Figures at Appendix B, chiefly:
- Figure 1 – Site Location Plan
 - Figure 2 – Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) – Bare-earth
 - Figure 3 - Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) – with Screening
 - Figure L1 - Viewpoint Location Plan
 - Figure L2-L9 – Viewpoints 1 – 8
- 1.5.14 In addition to these, the application is supported by and Illustrative Soft Landscape Proposals plan (321775- Figure L10 -Illustrative Soft Landscape Proposals)



2. Baseline Situation - Landscape Aspects

2.1 Landscape Policy

- 2.1.1 An appreciation of the ‘weight’ to be attributed to any visual and landscape effects arising from development starts with an understanding of the planning context within which any such development is to be tested for its acceptability.

European Landscape Convention

- 2.1.2 The UK is a signatory to the Council of Europe’s [European Landscape Convention](#) which promotes landscape protection, management and planning. The UK Government has stated that it considers the UK to be compliant with the ELC’s requirements and that the principal requirements of the ELC are already enshrined in the existing suite of national policies and guidance on the assessment of landscape and visual effects.
- 2.1.3 It is important to recognise that the ELC does not require the preservation of all landscapes although landscape protection is one of the core themes of the convention. Equally important though is the requirement to manage and plan future landscape change.

National Planning Policy - Landscape

- 2.1.4 It is stated in paragraph 10 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Department for Communities and Local Government, December 2024) that “at the heart of the framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development” and this is further elaborated on at paragraph 11.
- 2.1.5 The NPPF also recognises at paragraph 187 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).*
 - 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*
 - C. *maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate”.*
- 2.1.6 As referenced at NPPF paragraph 189, “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”.
- 2.1.7 As referenced at NPPF paragraph 198, “Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should:



- A. *mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development — and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life;*
- B. *identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason; and*
- C. *limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.”*

Local Policy - Landscape

- 2.1.8 The Site is mostly located on an area of land that is covered by the statutory development plans of North Hertfordshire District Council; the adopted plan is the North Hertfordshire District Local Plan (adopted November 2022 and covers the period from 2011 to 2031). An area along the eastern boundary of the Site is located within an area covered by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council and their adopted plan is the Welwyn Hatfield Adopted Local Plan (October 2023)

North Hertfordshire District Local Plan

- 2.1.9 A review of the policies map (Map C – Knebworth and Southern Area) shows that the Site is located within the Green Belt (Policy SP5) with no other statutory policies directly affecting the Site.
- 2.1.10 The following policies are considered as having some relevance to the Proposed Development and the wider landscape and context in which the Site is located, and the assessment of its acceptability in landscape and visual terms:

Policy SP5: Green Belt

Policy SP5: Countryside and Green Belt

We support the principles of the Green Belt and recognise the intrinsic value of the countryside. Green Belt and Rural Areas Beyond the Green Belt are shown on the Policies Map. We:

- a) Have conducted a comprehensive review of the Green Belt. Land has been removed from the Green Belt to:
 - i. enable strategic development at the locations referred to in Policies SP8 and SP3;
 - ii. enable local development around a number of the District's towns and villages; and
 - iii. define boundaries for villages referred to in Policy SP2 which fall within the Green Belt but were previously 'washed over' by this designation;
- b) Have provided new Green Belt to cover, in general terms, the area bounded by the Metropolitan Green Belt to the east, the Luton Green Belt to the west and the A505 Offley bypass to the north;
- c) Will only permit development proposals in the Green Belt where they would not result in inappropriate development or where very special circumstances have been demonstrated; and
- d) Will operate a general policy of restraint in Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt through the application of our detailed policies.



Policy SP12: Green infrastructure, landscape and biodiversity.

Policy SP12: Green infrastructure, landscape and biodiversity

We will accommodate significant growth during the plan period whilst ensuring the natural environment is protected and enhanced. We will:

- a) Protect, identify, manage and where possible enhance a strategic multi-functional network of green infrastructure;
- b) Consider and respect landscape character, scenic beauty and locally sensitive features, particularly in relation to the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- c) Protect, enhance and manage designated sites in accordance with the following hierarchy of designations and features:
 - Internationally designated sites
 - Nationally designated sites
 - Locally designated sites;
 - Non-designated sites that include important habitats and species
- d) Protect, enhance and manage biodiversity networks including wildlife corridors, ancient woodlands and hedgerows, wetland and riverine habitats, Local Geological Sites, protected species, priority species and habitats, and non-designated sites of ecological value and ensure measurable net gains for biodiversity; and
- e) Protect other open spaces and support provision of new and improved open space.

Policy CGB1: Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt.

Policy CGB1: Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt.

In the Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt, as shown on the Policies Map, planning permission will be granted provided that the development:

- a) Is infilling development which does not extend the built core of a Category B village;
- b) Meets a proven local need for community facilities, services or affordable housing in an appropriate location;
- c) Is strictly necessary for the needs of agriculture or forestry;
- d) Relates to an existing rural building;
- e) Is a modest proposal for rural economic development or diversification; or
- f) Would provide land or facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and cemeteries that respect the generally open nature of the rural area.



Policy CGB2a: Exception sites for affordable housing in the Green Belt.

Policy CGB2a: Exception sites for affordable housing in the Green Belt

Planning permission for limited affordable housing in the Green Belt

- Adjoining Category A villages; or
- Beyond the built core of Category B villages;

will be granted provided that the land is identified for such development in a Neighbourhood Plan or:

- a) It meets a proven local need as identified through a parish survey or other relevant study;
- b) There are no reasonable alternate, suitable and available sites:
 - i. within the defined boundaries of the relevant Category A settlement or the built core of the relevant Category B village; or
 - ii. otherwise within a reasonable travelling distance (by various modes) of the location where the need has been identified;
- c) The proposal would meet relevant criteria of Policy HS2, particularly in relation to need, affordability and retention of dwellings;
- d) The proposed development would not have a substantial adverse impact on the openness or general policy aims of the Green Belt; and
- e) The public benefit of the proposal outweighs any harm that might arise against these aims.

Development permitted in Category C settlements within the Green Belt under Policy SP2 will also need to meet criteria (a) to (e) above.



Policy D1: Sustainable Design

Policy D1: Sustainable design

Planning permission will be granted provided that development proposals:

- a) Respond positively to the site's local context;
- b) Take all reasonable opportunities, consistent with the nature and scale of the scheme, to:
 - i. create or enhance public realm;
 - ii. optimise the potential of the site by incorporating Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS);
 - iii. reduce energy consumption and waste;
 - iv. retain existing vegetation and propose appropriate new planting;
 - v. maximise accessibility, legibility and physical and social connectivity both internally and with neighbouring areas;
 - vi. future proof for changes in technology and lifestyle;
 - vii. design-out opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour; and
 - viii. minimise the visual impact of street furniture and parking provision;
- c) Have regard to the Design SPD, and any other relevant guidance;
- d) Within Letchworth Garden City have regard to the Letchworth Garden City Design Principles contained in Appendix 5; and
- e) For residential schemes, meet or exceed the nationally described space standards and optional water efficiency standards.

Policy NE2: Landscape

Policy NE2: Landscape

Planning permission will be granted for development proposals that:

- a) Respect the sensitivities of the relevant landscape character area and have regard to the guidelines identified for built development and landscape management;
- b) Do not cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area or the landscape character area in which the site is located, taking account of any suitable mitigation measures necessary to achieve this;
- c) Are designed and located to ensure the health and future retention of important landscape features; and
- d) Have considered the long-term management and maintenance of any existing and proposed landscaping.



Welwyn Hatfield Adopted Local Plan

- 2.1.11 The Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Local Plan (adopted October 2023) is also relevant and covers the period 2016 – 2036. The Site is not covered by any of the specific policies as illustrated on the Policies and Proposals Map other than Policy SP3: Greenbelt, however the following generic policies are considered relevant:

Policy SP3: Greenbelt

Policy SP 3

Settlement Strategy and Green Belt boundaries

In order to meet the need for housing and employment land this plan has identified land which has been released from the Green Belt. Green Belt boundaries have been defined as shown on the Policies Map. Planting and landscape buffers are proposed, as appropriate, to define newly established Green Belt boundaries, as indicated in the Local Plan and on the Policies Map. Green Belt boundaries will be maintained throughout the plan period and will only be reviewed through a review of this plan.

Consistent with the settlement hierarchy, the primary focus for new development will be in and around the two towns of Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield where accessibility to strategic transport networks and public transport is good and the greatest potential exists to maximise accessibility to job opportunities, shops, services and other facilities, and to create new neighbourhoods with supporting infrastructure.

The secondary focus for development will be in and around the excluded villages at a more limited scale, compatible with the more limited range of job opportunities, shops, services and other facilities available in these locations.

In villages and other rural areas of the borough that lie within the Green Belt, development will be restricted so as to be consistent with the type of development envisaged in national planning policy and other policies of this plan.

Development that would result in disproportionate growth to any of the settlements, conflict with the function and position of a settlement within the hierarchy, which cannot be supported by the necessary infrastructure or result in a loss of services and facilities which are considered to be key to supporting local communities will be resisted.



Policy SADM16:

Policy SADM 16

Ecology and Landscape

Ecological Assets

- i. Proposals will be expected to maintain, protect, conserve and enhance biodiversity, the structure and function of ecological networks and the ecological status of water bodies. All developments ⁽⁶³⁾ that are not otherwise exempt ⁽⁶⁴⁾ will be required to deliver a measurable biodiversity net gain of at least 10%.
- ii. Proposals that would result in loss of or harm to:
 - a. International sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Nature Reserves, Local Nature Reserves or other statutorily protected features or species, will be refused unless:
 - the mitigation hierarchy has been followed, to firstly avoid, reduce and remediate direct and indirect adverse impacts before considering compensation; and
 - imperative reasons of overriding public interest can be demonstrated.
 - b. Ancient Woodland, veteran trees, chalk river habitats or habitats or species of national principal importance, will be refused unless:

- the mitigation hierarchy has been followed, to firstly avoid, reduce and remediate direct and indirect adverse impacts before considering compensation; and
 - the need for, and benefits of, the development significantly outweigh the loss or harm.
- c. Local Wildlife Sites, other habitats, species and ecological assets of local importance, including ecological networks, woodland, orchards, protected trees and hedgerows and allotments, will be refused unless:
 - the mitigation hierarchy has been fully implemented to avoid, reduce and remediate and compensate direct and indirect adverse impacts; and
 - the need for, and benefits of, the development outweigh the loss or harm.
 - iii. Where compensation is required to make development acceptable within ii) above, necessary financial and/or other provision will be required to deliver and maintain ecological and biodiversity objectives over appropriate time scales

Landscape

Proposals will be expected to help conserve and enhance the borough's natural and historic landscape and sit comfortably within the wider landscape setting.

Proposals will be assessed for their impact on landscape features to ensure that they conserve or improve the prevailing landscape quality, character and condition. Proposals should take full account of the relevant Landscape Character Assessment and adopt the strategy and guidelines for managing change set out therein. Regard should also be had to relevant advice contained within the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record.



Policy SADM34: Development in the Greenbelt

Policy SADM 34

Development within the Green Belt

Within the Green Belt as defined on the Policies Map planning permission will be granted for development in accordance with national policy and other policies in this plan subject to the following criteria.

Openness and purposes of the Green Belt

Proposals for the re-use of buildings, appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and development on previously developed sites will need to demonstrate that they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. In assessing the impact of the proposal the Council will take into account:

- i. Whether the site lies within a parcel of land which makes a significant or partial contribution to one or more purposes of the Green Belt;
- ii. Whether the scale of development or activity would compromise that purpose;
- iii. The level of impact on both the physical and visual openness of the Green Belt.

Extensions and Alterations to Existing Buildings

Applicants will need to demonstrate that extensions and alterations to a building would not result, either individually or cumulatively, in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building⁽⁷⁷⁾, in terms of bulk, scale, height or massing. Account will be taken of the extent to which the extension and/or alteration would be consistent with the general pattern of development and character of the area and its prominence within the landscape.

Replacement Buildings

Replacement buildings will be permitted provided that the new building is not materially larger than the one it replaces in terms of its footprint, height and external volume and is in the same use. In assessing the impact of the proposal the Council will take into account:

- i. The location of the replacement building and its prominence within the landscape;
- ii. The extent to which the proposed development is consistent with the general pattern of development and character of the area

Consideration will be given to the removal of permitted development rights where considered necessary to protect the openness of the Green Belt.



Major Developed Sites

Four Major Developed Sites have been designated and comprise substantial areas of previously developed land in the Green Belt. They are

- New Barnfield Resources Centre, Hatfield
- Queenswood School Brookmans Park
- The Royal Veterinary College , North Mymms and
- Monks Walk and Knightsfield School, Welwyn Garden City

Their boundaries have been defined on the Policies Map and identify the extent of the area within which limited infill development or replacement buildings could occur. Proposals would need to comply with the criteria set out above and other than minor development, should come forward in the context of a Masterplan which has been agreed by the Council.

Change of Use

Proposals for change of use will need to demonstrate that they are consistent with both the settlement and rural areas strategies as well as the principles of sustainable development set out in the Local Plan. Existing buildings must be of permanent and substantial construction and capable of conversion without the need for substantial demolition and rebuilding.

Where a change of use of land is proposed applicants will need to demonstrate that the proposal would preserve the openness of the Green Belt and minimise any impact on the landscape.

Infill Development

Limited infill development will be permitted in villages within the Green Belt provided:

- i. It is within a continuous built up frontage;
- ii. It does not extend the existing 'built up' area of the village into the open countryside;
- iii. It would not result in the loss of a view or vista which makes a significant contribution to the character of the settlement; and
- iv. It is small scale and would not result in the provision of more than four dwellings (net)

Agricultural and Forestry Dwellings

Both permanent and temporary residential accommodation will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that there is a functional need for on-site accommodation and there is no other suitable accommodation on site or in the surrounding area.

2.2 Landscape Designations

- 2.2.1 No part of the Site lies within or near to a statutorily designated landscape (e.g. National Landscape or National Park).

2.3 Registered Battlefields

- 2.3.1 No part of the Site or wider Study Area lies within or adjacent to a Registered Battlefields.



2.4 Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments and Conservation Areas

2.4.1 A formal assessment of the historical setting of these heritage features falls outside the scope of this report and the professional experience of the report author. Irrespective of this, to help ascertain whether there were potential landscape-related effects of the Proposed Development on heritage features the following was determined:

- The Site does not lie within any **World Heritage Site**, and none are present in the wider study area.
- There are no **Scheduled Monuments** within the Site or immediate site area. Within the wider Study Area, the closest Scheduled Monument (ref: 1015580 'Dicket Mead Roman villa' is to the south-east of the Site, at a distance of approx. 1.38km.
- There are no **Listed Buildings** within the Site. Within the wider Study Area, a number of Listed Buildings have been identified, predominantly within the centre of Codicote and Welwyn, with several other sporadically located with the general Study Area. The closest Listed Building is a Grade II (ref 1348164 '44 Codicote Road') to the east and shares a boundary with the Site.
- The Site does not lie within or immediately adjacent to any **Conservation Areas**. Codicote Conservation Area lies to the north-west at a distance in excess of 1km at its closest point. The site visit confirmed there to be no intervisibility between the Site and this area.

2.5 Historic Land-use and Cover

2.5.1 Based on a review of available aerial images, the Site historically appears to be used as a plant nursery, at least since before the year 2000. The site appears to contain a number of outbuildings with ancillary storage of vehicles and other associated infrastructure, interspersed amongst areas of rough grassland and several large mature trees.

2.6 Rights of Way and Open Access Land

2.6.1 There are a limited number of Public Rights of Way near the Site, as illustrated on Plate 2. The closest PRoW is to the south-east at a distance of approx. 135m (Footpath Codicote 044) where it passes through an area woodland between Codicote Road and Fulling Mill Lane, linking with several smaller sections of PRoW in the vicinity of Singlers Marsh. Footpath Codicote 036 lies to the north-west at a distance of approx. 500m at its closest point to the Site boundary and provides a link between Codicote Road and St Albans Road. A review of the ZTV shows that there are possible views of the Site and Proposed Development from locations along these PRoW, with intervisibility varying due to changes within the local topography and existing vegetation in the local landscape.

2.6.2 It is noted that Footpath Codicote 044 appears located within in an area with considerable scrub and woodland cover, with intervening dwellings at the southern boundary of the Site, likely limiting potential for views (as illustrated on the screening ZTV at Figure 3). At the time of fieldwork, the accesses to Codicote 036 were indistinct and overgrown; whilst partially falling within the ZTV and partly elevated (at circa 90-100mAOD) it is noted that from aerial imagery, the footpath appears well-lined by hedgerow and trees and there is a tree belt and hedgerow and tree cover intervening to the Site (at a level of around 85mAOD), compared to the more settled nature of the Site (circa 75mAOD). As such, it can likely be predicted that the Proposed Development would be in the context of replacing the existing built form, would be well settled within the landscape and wider vegetated structure and would not be unduly or



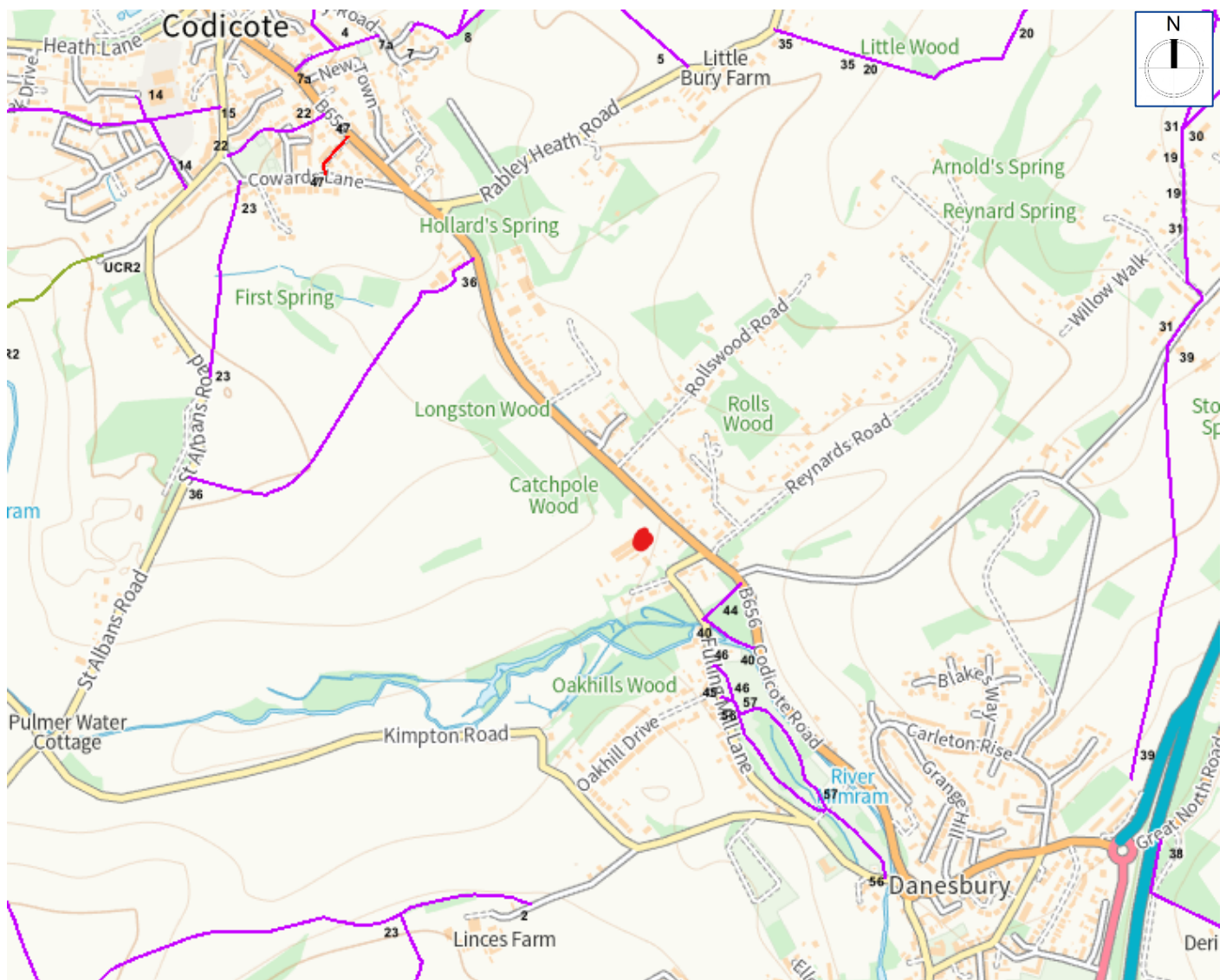
overridingly detrimental to any amenity afforded (over and above that assessed from other similar locations).

2.6.3 It has not been possible to identify any promoted walks within the immediate vicinity of the Site.

2.7 National Cycle Network

2.7.1 A review of the National Cycle Network's interactive map identifies Route 12 passing to the west of the Site, following the route of St Albans Road. A review of the ZTV shows that there are possible views of the Site and Proposed Development from locations along this route, at a distance of approx. 0.8km.

Plate 2: Showing Hertfordshire PRoW map (Site centre shown by red dot)



Source: Hertfordshire PRoW Interactive Map - Accessed 15/05/2026

[Webmaps - Rights of Way](#)



2.7.2 No areas of Open Access Land have been identified within the Study Area.

2.8 Ancient Woodlands

2.8.1 There are no areas of Ancient Woodland within or adjacent to the Site. Within the wider Study Area, the nearest area of Ancient Woodland lies approx. 1.7km to the south-west at Hurstlings Wood.

2.9 Registered Parks and Gardens

2.9.1 The Site is not located partially or wholly within a registered park or garden. Within the wider Study Area, the nearest Registered Park and Garden is the Grade II 'Ayot House' (ref: 1000905) at a distance of approx. 1.7km to the west. A review of the bare-earth ZTV identifies that there may be possible views from the extreme southern edge of this registered park, alongside Lord Mead Lane.

2.10 Local Roads/Transport Routes

2.10.1 The nearest road to the Site is the B656 Codicote Road to the east, where it borders, in part, a section of the Site boundary. This road extends to the south-east away from the Site and connects with the urban areas of Welwyn and the wider road network, including access to the A1(M) Junction 6. Several smaller local roads and lanes are interspersed across the wider Study Area.

2.11 Water Courses and Water Bodies

2.11.1 There are no water courses within the Site, although the Site does appear to contain an artificially made pool near its centre. Within the wider Study Area, the River Mimram curves through the landscape to the west of the Site before turning east and passes within approx. 50-80m of the Site's southern boundary.

2.12 Ecological Conservation

2.12.1 The Site does not contain or overlap any national or international designations for ecological conservation.

2.13 Landscape Character

Introduction

2.13.1 Landscape and visual appraisal are comprised of a study of two separate but inter-linked components:

Landscape character - which is the physical make up and condition of the landscape itself. Landscape character arises from a distinct, recognisable, and consistent pattern of physical and social elements, aesthetic factors and perceptual aspects; and

Visual amenity - which is the way in which the Site is seen and appreciated; views to and from the Site, their direction, character, and sensitivity to change.

2.13.2 This section summarises and reviews relevant published landscape assessments which contribute to a better understanding of the Site's landscape character.

National Landscape Character Assessment



- 2.13.3 The landscape of England has been subject to a nationwide landscape character assessment which divides England into National Character Areas (NCAs). The Site and LVA Study Area lie within **NCA 110 Chilterns** and is summarised as:

“The Chilterns are a distinctive outcrop of the Chalk, with a dramatic scarp forming the north-western boundary. From the long, north-west-facing scarp there are extensive, panoramic views over the adjacent vales. The dip slope falls gently to the south-east, cut by a series of branching valleys. The enclosed character of the valleys contrasts with the open plateau and long views from the scarp. Rising to just above 260m, the hills stretch from Oxfordshire to Bedfordshire in the north-east.

The area includes the lower-lying substantial settlements of Luton, Dunstable, Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted, Chesham, Amersham and High Wycombe. It is also crossed by sections of the M40 and M1 motorway corridors. The south-western boundary is formed by the River Thames. This belt of countryside is dominated by the river and its flood plain rather than by the hills

The area includes the lower-lying substantial settlements of Luton, Dunstable, Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted, Chesham, Amersham and High Wycombe. It is also crossed by sections of the M40 and M1 motorway corridors. The south-western boundary is formed by the River Thames. This belt of countryside is dominated by the river and its flood plain rather than by the hills.

Woodland cover is extensive, making the Chilterns one of the most wooded lowland landscapes in England. Large woods, dominated by beech, are found on the plateau and as ‘hanging’ woods above the valleys; there are also small farm woodlands. Chilterns beechwoods (designated as SAC) are renowned for ‘cathedral-like’ qualities and bright autumn colours. Secondary woodland is found on once-open common land and downland. Elsewhere, many woods are ancient.”

- 2.13.4 The characteristics of this NCA are described below:

- *The chalk plateau is incised by parallel branching valleys gently shelving to the south-east into the London Basin. The large chalk aquifer is abstracted for water to supply London and its surrounds and also supports flows of springs, chalk streams and the River Thames*
- *There are several chalk streams. Features associated with a history of modification include historic mills, watercress beds, culverts and habitat enhancements.*
- *The north-west-facing escarpment is an abrupt relief feature beside low-lying vales, breached notably by the Thames at the Goring Gap. The escarpment lowers northwards, terminating as distinct hills. The Chiltern ridge offers panoramic views.*
- *Within the Chilterns, views are enclosed within branching valleys, sunken routeways and extensive woodland and hedgerow-enclosed fields. There are hidden, tranquil pockets along single track lanes and rights of way.*
- *A mixture of arable, grassland and woodland and the numerous commons reflect the dominance of Grade 3 agricultural land. Ancient woodland has remained on extensive clay-with-flint deposits, while very steep slopes are rarely cultivated. There are, however, not inconsiderable areas of Grade 1 and 2 land that are associated with lower-lying areas and river valleys.*

- *The Chilterns are one of the most wooded lowland landscapes in England. The area is particularly renowned for its extensive native beechwoods, several of which are designated as part of the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Other distinctive features include rare box woods, ‘hanging’ woods on steep slopes and rare yew woods, including Hartslock Wood SAC.*
- *Pre-18th-century fields defined by ancient, often sinuous hedged boundaries are scattered throughout, including co-axial fields. Parliamentary enclosure fields are limited. Large modern fields, usually with ancient boundaries, cover the better agricultural land, most notably in the north-east.*
- *Remnants of various historic land use types can combine rich and diverse habitats and archaeology. Many key places are publicly accessible, including Registered Parks and Gardens, historic downland and common land. Traditional flood plain landscapes and orchards are the most restricted in extent. Historic routeways, hedged boundaries and watercourses provide connectivity.*
- *Historic downland preserves prehistoric archaeology and supports high numbers of rare and scarce chalk grassland vascular plants, mosses and liverworts. Diversity is enhanced by a mosaic of chalk grassland, scrub and woodland, with Hartslock Wood SAC being one example.*
- *Species strongly associated with the Chilterns include the red kite, pasque flower, stag beetle, Chiltern gentian, shepherd’s needle, chalkhill blue butterfly and native box. Aston Rowant SAC protects an internationally important juniper scrub population. Farmland birds and deer are a feature of the wider countryside.*
- *Nucleated settlements of medieval origin and land farmed since prehistory are found alongside watercourses and springs in the through-valleys and at the foot of the scarp. Elsewhere, dispersed farmsteads dating from the medieval period and mid-19th-century development around commons are characteristic of the plateau.*
- *The River Thames and its flood plain mark a distinctive area in the south. The river is a focus for settlement, abstraction and recreation.*
- *Major transport routes, including motorways, radiate from adjacent Greater London, associated with significant 20th-century development and extensive urban fringe areas.*
- *Brick and flint are the dominant traditional building materials, with Totternhoe Stone (clunch) being less common, but still distinctive*
- *Numerous parkland landscapes define large, historic estates. Designs by Humphry Repton and Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown are represented, and the houses, follies and wooded features provide local landmarks.*
- *Extensive rights of way, commons, open access downland, woodland and some parklands provide access to the countryside. The Thames Path, the Ridgeway and the Grand Union Canal are high-profile recreation routes; locally promoted routes include the Chilterns*



Cycleway. Private leisure land uses, including golf courses and horse paddocks, are common near urban centres.

2.13.5 Field study revealed that the Site and its immediate context contain very few of the elements of those key characteristics described above, primarily due to the location and limited scale of the Site. As such the national character assessment can only provide a broad overview of landscape character.

2.13.6 The eastern parts of the Study Area also fall within NCA111 – Northern Thames Basin, whose key characteristics are listed as follows:

- *The landform is varied with a wide plateau divided by river valleys. The prominent hills and ridges of the 'Bagshot Hills' are notable to the northwest and extensive tracts of flat land are found in the south.*
- *Characteristic of the area is a layer of thick clay producing heavy, acidic soils, resulting in retention of considerable areas of ancient woodland.*
- *Areas capped by glacial sands and gravels have resulted in nutrient-poor, free-draining soils which support remnant lowland heathlands, although these are now small. Areas that have alluvial deposits present are well drained and fertile.*
- *The water bearing underlying Chalk beds are a main source of recharge for the principal London Basin Chalk aquifer.*
- *A diverse landscape with a series of broad valleys containing the major rivers Ver, Colne and Lea, and slightly steeper valleys of the rivers Stour, Colne and Roman. Numerous springs rise at the base of the Bagshot Beds, and several reservoirs are dotted throughout the area*
- *The pattern of woodlands is varied across the area and includes considerable ancient semi-natural woodland. Hertfordshire is heavily wooded in some areas as are parts of Essex, while other areas within Essex are more open in character. Significant areas of wood pasture and pollarded veteran trees are also present.*
- *The field pattern is very varied across the basin reflecting historical activity. Informal patterns of 18th-century or earlier enclosure reflects medieval colonisation of the heaths. Regular planned enclosures dating from the Romano-British period are a subtle but nationally important feature on the flat land to the south-east of the area. In the Essex heathlands 18th- and 19th-century enclosure of heathlands and commons followed by extensive 20th-century field enlargement is dominant.*
- *Mixed farming, with arable land predominating in the Hertfordshire plateaux, parts of the London Clay lowlands and Essex heathlands. Grasslands are characteristic of the river valleys throughout. Horticulture and market gardening are found on the light, sandy soils of former heaths in Essex, particularly around Colchester, along with orchards, meadow pasture and leys following numerous narrow rivers and streams.*



- *The diverse range of semi-natural habitats include ancient woodland, lowland heath and floodplain grazing marsh and provide important habitats for a wide range of species including great crested newt, water vole, dormouse and otter.*
- *Rich archaeology including sites related to Roman occupation, with the Roman capital at Colchester and City of St Albans (Verulamium) and links to London. Landscape parklands surrounding 16th- and 17th-century rural estates and country houses built for London merchants are a particular feature in Hertfordshire.*
- *The medieval pattern of small villages and dispersed farming settlement remains central to the character of parts of Hertfordshire and Essex. Market towns have expanded over time as have the London suburbs and commuter settlements, with the creation of new settlements such as the pioneering garden city at Welwyn and the planned town at Basildon.*

Local Landscape Character Assessment

2.13.7 At a local level, Hertfordshire Council have produced the Welwyn Hatfield Landscape Character Assessment and is considered to be applicable, with the Site lying within the Landscape Character Area (LCA) 133a 'Danesbury Settled Slopes' whose landscape character is described as:

“An undulating slope with localised deep depressions and dry valleys creating an enclosed character in places. Much of the slopes have been sparsely settled by detached residential properties set within large garden plots. Views are limited by topography and boundary vegetation. The land use reflects the urban fringe location. The influence of the former Danesbury Estate is evident. Some areas of the parkland are still very dominant in the area and include formal and informal recreational uses.”

2.13.8 Key characteristics are described as:

- *deeply incised dry valleys*
- *southwest facing slopes*
- *parallel roads at right angles to contours*
- *urban fringe recreation*
- *scattered residential settlement in large garden plots*
- *underlying historic cultural patterns prominent although poorly preserved and managed*
- *variety of property styles and boundary treatments, including ranch fencing to paddocks*
- *areas of horsiculture*

2.13.9 Distinctive features of this LCA are described as:



- *Danesbury house and associated parkland architecture and former estate cottages*
- *springs on the higher ground, including Arnold's and Reynard's Springs*
- *A1(M) corridor to east*
- *Danesbury golf course*
- *mature and over mature parkland trees*

2.13.10 In addition, visual and sensory perception and visual impact are described as:

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION The area is locally visible with short, filtered views limited by wooded boundaries, topography, hedgerows and settlement. The scale of the landscape elements is small in a contained and visually coherent character type. There is audible intrusion from the A1(M) motorway to the east. Rarity and distinctiveness. The landscape character is unusual with its deeply incised valleys overlaid by combination of sparse yet even coverage of residential settlement and the historic parkland of Danesbury.

VISUAL IMPACT The impact of built development is moderate and widespread through the scattered housing. The A1(M) is intrusive to the east as seen from the east facing slopes of Danesbury and the late 20th century residential estate to the edge of Welwyn creates another adverse impact on the parkland.

2.13.11 The Condition of the landscape overall is assessed as being **Poor**, with a Strength of Character assessed as being **Strong** with a guidance note stating, “restore condition to maintain character.”

2.13.12 The wider Study Area, particularly to the immediate south-west of the Site lies within the LCA 132 ‘Codicote Bottom Arable Valley’, whose key characteristics are described as:

- gently undulating broad valley slopes
- sinuous country lanes
- isolated residential and farm buildings in red brick
- regular field pattern
- flood meadows and wetland habitats adjacent to River Mimram east of Pulmer Water
- arable cropping
- lack of hedgerows and woodlands.

2.13.13 Distinctive features of this LCA are described as:



- pollarded and coppiced willows at Singlers Marsh wildlife site
- informal recreational activities in Singlers Marsh area
- forded river crossings
- open cast lime quarry and associated planting

2.13.14 The Codicote Bottom Arable Valley LCA is described as “... A broad curving open valley, with gently undulating slopes and a flat open valley floor. West of Pulmer Water the valley floor is flat, and agricultural cultivation has been taken right up to the water's edge in places, rendering the watercourse almost invisible. In contrast to the east a narrow sub area of pasture follows the flood plain of the River Mimram which begins to braid and then sharply turns a 90 degrees corner southwards. The settlements of Old Welwyn and Danesbury enclose the eastern end of the valley and a distinct change in land cover and vegetation associated with the underlying geology and soils forms the northwestern end. The southern slopes of the valley are much broader and more gently undulating than the northern slopes. Arable crops and the lack of hedgerow vegetation create a uniform character, texture and colour to the majority of the landscape. The area feels open and light with many opportunities to take views right across the valley. Despite its proximity to settlement, the area has a fairly remote character.”

“VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION - A contained valley of medium scale landscape elements. Views are limited by topography and vegetation on the horizon. Views to the east of the area are confined more by vegetation and settlement close to the edges of Welwyn.

RARITY AND DISTINCTIVENESS - This area is unusual in Hertfordshire due to the shape and confinement of the valley, skirting the southern boundary of Codicote village.

VISUAL IMPACT - The most dominant impact on the area is the lime quarry on the south facing slopes and its surrounding screening by tall ornamental fir trees. The road and settlement have an influence on the eastern tail of the valley. Management techniques at the Singlers marsh wildlife site increases the contrasting scale of visual impact and landscape change further along the river valley.”

2.13.15 The Condition of the landscape overall is assessed as being **Poor**, with a Strength of Character assessed as being **Strong** with a guidance note stating, “restore condition to maintain character.”

Landscape Characteristics from Fieldwork

2.13.16 Arthian assessed the Sites and the surrounding area's landscape characteristics in May 2026, in dry clear conditions.

2.13.17 The individual characteristics of the Site and locality were noted, as was the condition of these. Differences in the composition and the character of the Site's physical components were noted as well as their sensitivity to and ability to accommodate change (for definitions, see Glossary). The Site's and locality's key characteristics and its local context are described further below.

Landform

2.13.18 The Site is located on a south-easterly slope from a height of c. 85mAOD at its highest point adjacent Catchpole Wood and c. 70mAOD at its south-eastern corner. Several locations within the Site have



been artificially created based on former land-uses. The landform of the wider landscape within the Study Area generally consists of a series of hill tops separated by shallow valleys, with levels varying between c.100mAOD to c. 70mAOD, creating an undulating landscape.

Land-use and Vegetation Cover

- 2.13.19 The landscape within the Site reflects the previous usage as a Nursery, with a number of buildings, areas of hardstanding and fencing still present, set amongst areas of rough grassland and mature trees along southern and northern boundaries.
- 2.13.20 The landscape of the Study Area varies. In the vicinity of the Site, development consists of housing and smaller industrial or commercial estates aligning the Codicote Roads eastern edge, with more sporadic residential estates to the west, conjoining the settlements of Codicote and Welwyn. The parkland landscape of Danesbury Park lies to the south-east of the Site and to the west, the landscape is more agricultural in nature, consisting of a number of arable fields of irregular size and shape. The valley floor, following the course of the River Mimram and its smaller tributaries, is lined with small woodland groupings and occasional areas of wetland pasture.

Infrastructure

- 2.13.21 There is no significant existing infrastructure on the Site or within the wider Study Area.

Settlement and Built Development

- 2.13.22 Several buildings and structures remain within the Site reflecting its former use as a plant nursery. Beyond the Site boundary, the most influential built developments consist of the dwellings fronting the eastern edge of Codicote Road (i.e. fronting the Site) and the two larger buildings immediately adjacent the Site along its eastern edge with Codicote Road. Both properties are considered likely to have varying degrees of intervisibility with the Site.
- 2.13.23 Further afield from the Site boundary are the urban areas of Codicote at a distance of c. 0.7km to the north-west, and several new dwellings to the south accessed from Fulling Mill Lane to the immediate south of the Site boundary. Further south lie several smaller residential estates with the main urban area of Welwyn to the south-east.

2.14 Landscape Value

- 2.14.1 A range of relevant factors have been considered in evaluating the landscape value of the Site and its surrounding area. These include the presence of landscape designations, overall landscape condition, scenic quality, rarity, tranquillity, conservation interest, recreational use, and agricultural value. Taking these aspects into account, the landscape character and attributes of the Site and surrounding area are assessed as being of **Medium value** overall.
- 2.14.2 In relation to NPPF paragraph 189, it is not considered that the Site and the surrounding landscape over which the Proposed Development may exert an influence is a 'valued landscape'.

3. Baseline Situation - Visual Aspects

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 This section describes the views available to and from the Site, their distribution, character, and sensitivity to change. Arthian has recorded and assessed the views available to and from the Site from public locations through a combination of desk studies and fieldwork.
- 3.1.2 Strictly, in legal terms, there is no automatic right to a view. However, the enjoyment of a view could be an important part of the residential visual amenity of a location (e.g., a neighbouring property), and its loss might, therefore, have an adverse impact on the residential visual amenity of that property (i.e. an environmental effect on humans). Visual receptors at public locations are generally considered to be of higher sensitivity than visual receptors at private locations, although the effects on numerous private residences may be considered to have an effect on the wider local community, rather than individuals.

3.2 Visibility

- 3.2.1 Two 'Zone of Theoretical Visibility' exercises have been undertaken and are attached at Appendix B as Figure 2 and Figure 3.
- 3.2.2 Figure 2 'Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) – Bare ground' is based on a source point of 9m above existing ground levels and reflects the likely ridge lines of the properties. This ZTV is considered to represent a worst-case scenario, i.e. bare earth and does not account for other intervening screening from hedgerows, trees, and other built elements. Subtle variation in topography and varying degrees of visibility through field boundary vegetation and roadside plantations will also combine to restrict or vary potential visibility at various times of the year. The blue colour on the ZTV represents areas where the Proposed Development would be potentially visible from.
- 3.2.3 Figure 3 'Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) – with Indicative Screening' is based on a similar height of source point as Figure 2, but in addition to modelling the screening effects of existing topography, it also includes large areas of woodlands that have been modelled at 12m in height and also adjacent built form that itself could limit views of the Proposed Development. Further elements such as individual trees, very small tree groupings or roadside vegetation and field boundary hedgerows have not been considered and are likely to further limit views of the Site and proposals. This, in conjunction with fieldwork undertaken in May 2026, has helped reach a good understanding of the potential visibility of the Proposed Development and selection of representative viewpoints.
- 3.2.4 Predicted visibility of the Proposed Development is generally greater during the winter months, when trees and hedgerows are not in leaf. Where relevant, professional judgement has been applied to estimate potential winter views. These are discussed in the Viewpoint Assessment.



Plate 3: Extract from Figure 2 – ZTV 'Bare ground' to 5.0km

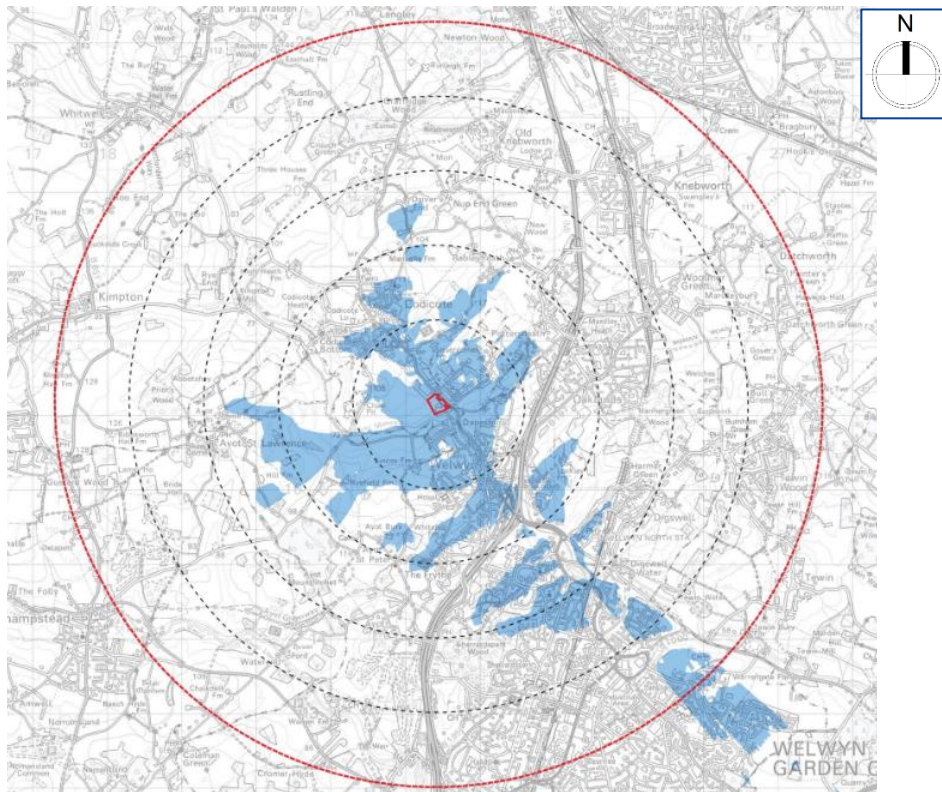
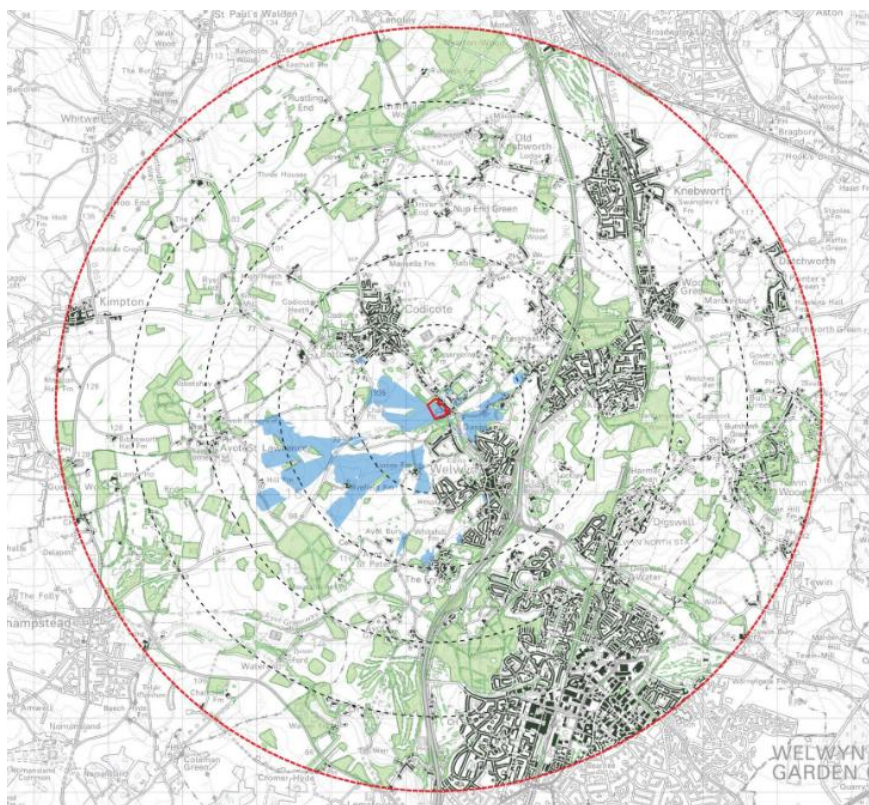


Plate 4: Extract from Figure 3 – 'ZTV with Indicative Screening' to 5.0km



- 3.2.5 The ZTV's suggest that the Site and Proposed Development are visible from the surrounding area, potentially to a distance of approx. 2.5 km to the north and west and beyond 5km to the south-east. The presence of a number of well-established woodlands within the landscape surrounding the Site and wider Study Area reduces the likely visibility even further to a reduced maximum distance of between 1 and 2km. Fieldwork has confirmed that actual visibility from the surrounding area is significantly more limited than suggested by either ZTV's, primarily due to the varied undulating topography of the area, the presence of a number of large woodland blocks, well-established roadside vegetation in the form of high hedgerows and hedgerow trees and built development.
- 3.2.6 In practice, visibility of the Site is largely confined to close-range views from the adjacent B656 Codicote Road and dwellings immediately fronting the road, orientated in the direction of the Site. As distance increases, the undulating topography of the area and increasing levels of intervening vegetation combine to limit or filter views, even during the winter months.
- 3.2.7 There is a lack of publicly accessible areas within the wider landscape, and views may be possible from the open areas within Danesbury Park to the south-east, local roads to the south-west and west and from the occasional footpaths within the same area general area. Where views may be possible, the Proposed Development will be seen in the context of existing built form along the Codicote Road between Welwyn and Codicote, set within a well established and well vegetated landscape.
- 3.2.8 Further detailed analysis and supporting photography are provided within the Viewpoint Assessment section of this report.

3.3 Viewpoints

- 3.3.1 The locations of a representative range of viewpoints where views could be potentially influenced by the Proposed Development are illustrated on Figure L1 'Viewpoint Location Plan' and Figures L2 to L9 ('Viewpoints') and have been selected to best represent the variety of views accessible and available from public vantage points towards the Site, at the time of fieldwork.
- 3.3.2 Based on fieldwork and the available visibility, eight representative viewpoints have been presented which best represent the range of views available and to illustrate, where the likely most notable effects may be predicted to occur. These are described in Table 1.
- 3.3.3 It is noted that visibility towards the Site is predicted to be generally limited based on the ZTV analysis and particularly the screened ZTV analysis at Figure 3. Where theoretical visibility intercepts screened areas, particularly within the existing built form, visibility towards the Site is not achieved. Some viewpoint locations have been illustrated to investigate the integrity of existing screening during fieldwork (e.g. Viewpoint 4). Some viewpoints may also fall outside of the ZTVs, where these have been selected as the most appropriate locations where open or unimpeded views into the landscape may be achieved (and potentially illustrating the screening effect of topography) but noting views from other locations along a similar route may not be available (e.g. Viewpoints 6 and 7 represent views in to the landscape east of St Albans Road, but elsewhere along the road and to the north of the viewpoints, the road is entirely contained between high hedges, preventing views outwards and towards the Site).



Table 1: Representative Viewpoint (VPs) - Distances are from the VP location to the Site boundary.

VP No.	Location	Distance / direction from Site to VP	Rationale
1	Codicote Road	<10m NE	Representative of users of Codicote Rd and adjacent dwellings which have open views of the Site from both ground floor and first floor areas.
2	Codicote Road	<10m E	Representative of users of Codicote Rd and adjacent dwellings which have open views of the Site from both ground floor and first floor areas.
3	Open Space (Danesbury Park)	540m E	Representative of users of Danesbury Park for informal recreation.
4	Footpath Codicote 044	130m SE	Representative of users of Footpath Codicote 044
5	Kimpton Road	0.65km SW	Representative of users of local road network
6	St Albans Road	1.12km W	Representative of users of local road network
7	St Albans Road	1.02km W	Representative of users of local road network
8	Footpath Codicote 023	1.26km SW	Representative of users of Footpath Codicote 034

3.3.4 These viewpoints are described and assessed in Section 4.3.



4. Landscape and Visual Assessment

4.1 Assumptions and Limitations

- 4.1.1 It is assumed that the Site would otherwise continue to be used as existing, should permission not be granted, as the 'do nothing' scenario.
- 4.1.2 The assessment is made against a baseline situation of the following assumptions:
- The proposed landscaping works are undertaken in the first appropriate period following the construction of the development.
 - It is assumed that the recommended impact avoidance/mitigation measures are able to be implemented through the detailed design process, as there is no reason known at the time of assessment for these not to be incorporated. This includes use of best practice landscaping, construction, planting, and ongoing management/maintenance techniques to promote rapid establishment and increase amenity, biodiversity and other functions of the residual landscape.
 - The surrounding landscape context remains the same, including the predominant retention of main woodland blocks (both density and heights), boundary hedgerows and trees where present are retained.
- 4.1.3 The fieldwork was undertaken during daylight hours during May 2026. No access was available to private locations to ascertain actual views from these locations. Professional judgement has been used to anticipate views based on publicly accessible locations.
- 4.1.4 The information used for the assessment of cumulative impacts was made using the information available from the Client and Agent for other developments in the locality at the time of the assessment.

4.2 Assessment of Landscape Effects

Effects on Landscape Characteristics (within the Site)

- 4.2.1 The Site is the location of a former nursery and is currently a farm shop, with a number of buildings, outbuildings and areas of hardstanding amongst areas of grassland and a number of mature deciduous trees which are characteristic of the surrounding landscape and contribute to the area's rural fringe setting. These landscape features, notably the existing mature trees, are located throughout the Site but predominantly within the northern areas and to a lesser degree in southern areas, with occasional trees along the western boundary, and are considered to have high susceptibility to change due to their naturalistic structure, established condition, and contribution to landscape pattern. The Proposed Development has been designed to retain all existing trees along the boundaries with some occasional loss of trees within the southern areas to facilitate development.
- 4.2.2 The existing land use comprises areas of semi-improved grassland, rough grassland, areas of dilapidated buildings and hardstanding and a number of old vehicles and storage containers. This land cover is considered to have **low susceptibility** to the type of change proposed. When combined with a **Low-to-Medium Landscape Value**, reflecting its lack of designation, limited scenic quality, and functional use, the overall **Landscape Sensitivity at the Site level is assessed as Medium**.



- 4.2.3 The Proposed Development would result in the permanent loss of these features (noting the majority of trees are to be retained) and introduction of built form, open space, and infrastructure, representing a medium magnitude of change. This would lead to a **Moderate** adverse effect on landscape characteristics, particularly during construction and early operation. The effect is considered to be Long-term in duration.
- 4.2.4 Areas of the existing grassland would be lost, and the Proposed Development includes the integration of structural and native planting, including hedgerows, trees, and areas of public open space. Over time, this planting is expected to enhance the landscape fabric and ecological connectivity of the Site, contributing to improved green infrastructure. This is expected to result in incremental landscape benefits, particularly in relation to habitat provision, biodiversity value, and visual softening of the built form. While these enhancements are limited in scale relative to the overall change, they are assessed as resulting in a **Very Small magnitude** of positive change, leading to a **Negligible beneficial effect** on landscape characteristics within the Site over the Very Long term.

Effects on Landscape Character (within the Site)

- 4.2.5 The Site does not fall within any nationally or locally designated landscapes. Its existing character is defined by its location on the existing urban edge and current use as a Farm Shop, with a number of urbanising elements present. In terms of susceptibility, the Site is considered to have **Low susceptibility** to the type of change proposed, reflecting its transitional character between rural farmland and adjacent built form. When combined with a **Low to Medium Landscape Value**, owing to the absence of designations and limited scenic or cultural qualities, the **overall Landscape Sensitivity is assessed as Low - Medium**.
- 4.2.6 The semi-urban character of the Site and its position on the periphery of the existing urban area, the Site is influenced by adjacent residential dwellings to the west and in a more limited capacity, dwellings to the south. These built elements reduce the sense of rurality and contribute to a settlement fringe character. The Proposed Development would introduce additional built form, including residential units and an extension to the existing access road, as well as areas of Public Open Space and other areas of incidental planting. These changes would result in the modification of land-use through the loss of areas of semi-improved and rough grassland alongside a number of older dilapidated buildings and remnant areas of hardstanding. The current landscape pattern would be retained.
- 4.2.7 The Site is moderately enclosed, with established boundary vegetation providing a degree of visual containment from the wider landscape. Visibility of the development would primarily be limited to Codicote along the eastern boundary and adjacent residential dwellings, with more limited views from the wider landscape through occasional gaps within boundary vegetation. Consequently, the perceived extent of change from surrounding public areas would be relatively constrained.
- 4.2.8 In Green Belt terms, the Site has a noticeably contained relationship with its surroundings. Existing residential and commercial development along Codicote Road, together with mature woodland blocks adjacent to the northern and southern boundaries and established boundary vegetation, create a strong sense of enclosure and visual containment when experienced from the surrounding landscape. The Site reads as a transitional area between existing built development and the rural landscape beyond, rather than forming part of an expansive tract of open countryside. The Site already comprises existing development, notably the old nursery buildings, which are visible from certain vantage points, but given



the overall visually contained nature of the Site they do not unduly influence the openness of the wider landscape.

- 4.2.9 Whilst the Proposed Development would introduce additional built form, the effects on the perception of openness would be experienced principally at a local level and within the immediate vicinity of the Site. Owing to the contained nature of the Site, existing settlement influences, and restricted visibility from the wider landscape, the development would not result in a widespread alteration to the character of the surrounding countryside or materially change how the wider landscape is experienced.
- 4.2.10 At completion (Year 1), the landscape change, at the Site level is assessed as being of **Medium Magnitude**, reflecting the scale and nature of development alongside the Site's limited baseline value and restricted visibility. When combined with the assessed **Medium Sensitivity**, and using professional judgement this results in a **Moderate adverse effect** on the Site's landscape character.
- 4.2.11 This effect would be most pronounced in the early years, prior to the establishment of proposed structural and native planting. Over time, the development's green infrastructure would mature, contributing positively to the local landscape fabric, reinforcing boundary vegetation, and improving visual integration with the surrounding context. As planting establishes and the development becomes more assimilated into its setting, the magnitude of change is expected to reduce, with landscape effects lessening accordingly, leading to the potential for **Negligible to Minor effects in the longer term**.

Effects on landscape character near the Site

- 4.2.12 As identified in the baseline assessment, the Site lies within the Danesbury Settled Slopes Landscape Character Area (LCA 133a) whose overall character is assessed as being 'strong'. Similarly, the wider Study Area that is located within the neighbouring 'Codicote Bottom Arable Valley' (LCA 132) is also assessed as having a 'strong' character. In both instances, the accompanying guidance notes contained within the respective landscape character assessment states "*restore condition to maintain character.*"
- 4.2.13 The landscape character in the immediate vicinity of the Site is already influenced by adjacent residential development with occasional areas of commercial also present, notably to the immediate east running alongside Codicote Road. The landscape character is also heavily influenced by the presence of a number of woodlands that are present along the valley floor following the course of the River Mimram and scattered along the valley sides. Woodland blocks immediately present to the north and south of the Site provide a sense of containment and as such the land to the west of Codicote Road forms a transitional zone between existing built form and the wider rural landscape.
- 4.2.14 The Site's contribution to the wider rural landscape is also influenced by its position relative to existing built form and vegetation. Although located within the Green Belt, the Site is visually and physically associated with development along Codicote Road and does not occupy a prominent or exposed position within the wider countryside. The combination of woodland, mature boundary vegetation and surrounding development limits both outward views from the Site and inward views towards it.
- 4.2.15 Consequently, the Proposed Development would not substantially alter the perception of the wider countryside or reduce the sense of separation experienced across the broader landscape. Effects would remain geographically limited and concentrated within the Site itself, Codicote Road and a small number



of immediately adjacent receptors. Beyond these areas, the influence of the development would diminish rapidly due to topography, vegetation cover and the contained nature of the Site.

- 4.2.16 With the Site being relatively well contained by existing woodlands and local areas of vegetation and existing development, visibility is largely restricted to short-range views from a limited number of Public Rights of Way (PROWs) and occasional dwellings to the west.
- 4.2.17 Considering the scale and location of the Proposed Development, its limited geographical influence, and the existing settlement-fringe context of the Site, the change at the character area level is assessed as being of **Very Small Magnitude** during construction and early use.
- 4.2.18 Using professional judgement, the overall level of effect on the landscape character of the wider LCA is judged to be **Minor adverse** at worst. These effects would be highly localised and are expected to diminish over time as proposed planting establishes, and the development becomes more visually and functionally integrated into the settlement edge.

Table 2: Summary of Assessed Landscape Impact Significance

General Aspect	Specific Aspect	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Level of Effect
Landscape Characteristics at the Site	Construction Period	Medium	Medium	Moderate Adverse
	Residual Period		Very Small	Negligible
Site Landscape Character	Construction Period	Medium	Medium	Moderate Adverse
	Residual Period		Very small	Negligible
Wider Landscape Character LCA 133a and LCA 132	Construction Period	Medium	Very small	Minor Adverse
	Residual Period	Medium	Very small	Negligible-Minor Adverse

4.3 Effects on Visual Amenity

- 4.3.1 The presentation of the assessment of visual effects has focused on representative viewpoints which represent sensitive locations with the potential to be affected to a level which would represent an important planning consideration. In line with the methodology, review of desktop information and as confirmed via fieldwork, visual barriers were widely confirmed around the Proposed Development; as such and noting the localised extent of influence the Proposed Development may exert on the surrounding landscape, the representative viewpoint locations were all located within 2km of the Site beyond which there is limited or no discernability that would lead to important, notable or material landscape and visual effects. These locations are assessed in further detail below.
- 4.3.2 Eight viewpoints have been selected to best represent the range of sensitive viewpoint locations and main effects within the ZTV and are illustrated using photographs in Figures L2 to L9. Other locations were visited and omitted due to minimal to no visibility of the Site.



4.3.3 The representative viewpoint locations are shown on Figure L1 and listed in Table 3 with an indication of the receptor groups represented, their distance from the Site (range) and the visual sensitivity of these receptors.

Table 3: Summary Visual Sensitivity of Receptors at Viewpoints (VPs)

VP No.	Location Description	Receptors Represented	Range	Sensitivity
1	Codicote Road	Representative of users of Codicote Road travelling south-east and dwellings fronting Codicote Road with both upper and ground floor views of the Site.	Close	Low
	Dwellings (Ground Floor)			High
	Dwellings (Upper Floors)			Medium
2	Codicote Road	Representative of users of Codicote Road travelling north-west and dwellings fronting Codicote Road with both upper and ground floor views of the Site.	Close	Low
	Dwellings (Ground Floor)			High
	Dwellings (Upper Floors)			Medium
3	Informal footpath with Danesbury Park	Representative of users walking within Danesbury Park	Medium	High
4	PRoW Footpath Codicote 044	Representative of users of Footpath Codicote 044	Close	High
5	Kimpton Road	Representative of users of Kimpton Road travelling east	Medium	Low
6	St Albans Road	Representative of users of St Albans Road	Medium	Low
7	St Albans Road	Representative of users of Kimpton Road travelling east	Medium	Low
	Dwellings (Ground Floor)			High
	Dwellings (Upper Floors)			Med
8	PRoW Footpath Codicote 023	Representative of users of Footpath Codicote 044	Medium	High

Individual Visual Effects on Viewpoint 1 and 2

4.3.4 Viewpoints 1 and 2 are located on Codicote Road to the north-east and south-east of the Site and the current access point, see Figures L2 and L3 respectively. The eastern boundary is formed by a grass roadside verge and a mixture of styles of timber fencing, varying in heights between 1.2 and 1.5 meters. A remnant section of native hedgerow and a number of mature trees are also along or just inside this boundary. A number of smaller sheds and buildings are visible, along with elements of horiculture and informal vehicle storage. Visual receptors at this location include road users (**Low** sensitivity) and nearby residents (**Medium** sensitivity – upper floor rooms / rooms not usually frequented in daylight hours & **High** sensitivity - residents in frequently used ground rooms and property curtilages) who will have direct and close-range views of the Site from both ground and upper floor windows of the dwellings. At this



location, Codicote Road is also lined by two roadside footpaths whose users are considered as being **Medium** sensitivity receptors.

- 4.3.5 Baseline views include the roadside hedgerow and existing trees flanking the existing entrance, with views of the current usage, noting views of the wider rural landscape to the west are limited by existing boundary vegetation. For road users, views are transient and the Site is oblique to the view.
- 4.3.6 Upon completion (Year 1), the Proposed Development will include views of the new access road (and the removal of existing) with new residential properties behind, but in closer proximity to Codicote Road than any existing development currently is. Existing vegetation in the forms of mature trees will be retained. For both viewpoints, views are experienced against the existing backdrop of existing residential development. For road users, the Magnitude of change would be Medium, and given the Low sensitivity of this visual receptor group, the overall level of effect is assessed as **Minor – Moderate adverse** at Year 1.
- 4.3.7 For properties along Codicote Road with front-facing elevations towards the Site, ground floor views would be broadly similar to those from the road but slightly more set back. In many cases, front garden vegetation would further filter views of the Proposed Development. The Magnitude of change is considered Medium, primarily influenced by the visual gap created by the development set-back from the road. Given the High visual sensitivity of residential receptors, the overall level of effect is assessed as **Moderate adverse** at Year 1.
- 4.3.8 First-floor views from these properties would be more elevated and slightly more expansive. These views would remain partially filtered by existing boundary vegetation but would experience a Medium Magnitude of change. Considering a Medium sensitivity at this level, the effect is judged as **Moderate adverse** at Year 1.
- 4.3.9 During winter months, visibility would be slightly increased due to the absence of foliage on deciduous vegetation. However, this seasonal variation does not materially alter the overall level of effect, which remains as assessed above.
- 4.3.10 Over time, the proposed native boundary planting would establish and strengthen the vegetative framework along the Site boundary. While it may not fully screen upper storeys of new dwellings, it would assist in integrating the development into the landscape and soften its visual presence. As a result, the Magnitude of change would reduce, leading to a lower level of adverse visual effect in the Long term.

Table 4: Visual Effects on Viewpoints 1 and 2

Visual Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude		Nature and Importance of Effect
Road users	Low	Upon Completion (at Year 1)	Medium	Minor Moderate adverse
		Year 10 (planting established)	Medium	Minor adverse (very long term)
Residents (Ground floor rooms)	High	Upon Completion (at Year 1)	Medium	Moderate – Major adverse
		Year 10 (planting established)	Medium	Moderate adverse (very long term)
Residents (First floor rooms)	Medium	Upon Completion (at Year 1)	Medium	Moderate adverse
		Year 10 (planting established)	Medium	Minor adverse (very long term)



Individual Visual Effects on Viewpoint 3

- 4.3.11 Viewpoint 3 is located within Danesbury Park to the east of the Site. At this location, the park is at an elevation of approx. 100m AOD and theoretically has views to the west. See Figure L4 - Viewpoint 3). Visual receptors at this location are considered to be **High** sensitivity.
- 4.3.12 The baseline view comprises a field of rough grassland, bordered by a number of mature trees alongside a narrow woodland belt that combine to limit views of the Site or any nearby residential areas. The Site is not visible as a result.
- 4.3.13 Upon completion (Year 1), the Proposed Development will not be visible to users of Danesbury Park, and as a result the magnitude of change is considered as being **None** and the overall level of effect is assessed as being **None-Neutral**.

Table 5: Visual Effects on Viewpoint 3

Visual Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude		Nature and Importance of Effect
Informal footpath with Danesbury Park	High	Upon Completion (at Year 1)	None	None-Neutral
		Year 10 (planting established)	None	None-Neutral

Individual Visual Effects on Viewpoint 4

- 4.3.14 Viewpoint 4 is located on Public Right of Way (PRoW) Footpath 'Codicote 044', to the south-east of the Site at Close range. See Figure L5. The photograph is taken from a location where there is a gap in the hedgerow vegetation alongside the footpath, offering a limited view towards the Site. Visual receptors at this location are considered as High.
- 4.3.15 The baseline view comprises a section of hedgerow alongside rough grassland and extensive areas of weeds and undergrowth. Beyond this lies a number of established trees that screen existing residential property to the south-east corner of the Site and the Site itself.
- 4.3.16 Upon completion (Year 1), the Proposed Development would not be visible to users of Footpath Codicote 044, and as a result the magnitude of change is considered as being **None** and the overall level of effect is assessed as being **None-Neutral**. During winter months, when trees are without leaf and visibility is increased, the extent of the woodland and planting are considered to be of a depth that none of the development will be visible as a result and the level of assessment remains the same.

Table 6: Visual Effects on Viewpoint 4

Visual Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude		Nature and Importance of Effect
PRoW Footpath Codicote 044	High	Upon Completion (at Year 1)	None	None-Neutral
		Year 10 (planting established)	None	None-Neutral



Individual Visual Effects on Viewpoint 5

- 4.3.17 Viewpoint 5 is located on Kimpton Road to the south-west of the Site, at a location identified within the ZTV as having the potential for Medium range views of the Site and Proposed Development. See Figure L6. Visual receptors at this location are considered as High.
- 4.3.18 The baseline view is taken on Kimpton Road at the location of a gap within the established roadside vegetation, that flanks either side of the local road. The hedgerow is well managed to a height of c. 1.8m and fills the foreground of the view, with only upper elements of riparian vegetation to the River Mimram visible beyond, alongside elements of woodlands that flank the Site, which itself is not visible in the view. No urbanising features, other than the local road itself, are visible within the view.
- 4.3.19 Upon completion (Year 1), the Proposed Development will not be visible to users of the local road network, and as a result the magnitude of change is considered as being **None** and the overall level of effect is assessed as being **None-Neutral**. During winter months, when trees and vegetation are without leaf and visibility is generally increased, the layering of the existing woodland and hedgerow are considered to be of a depth that none of the development will be visible as a result and the level of assessment remains the same.

Table 7: Visual Effects on Viewpoint 5

Visual Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude		Nature and Importance of Effect
Kimpton Road	Low	Upon Completion (at Year 1)	None	None-Neutral
		Year 10 (planting established)	None	None-Neutral

Individual Visual Effects on Viewpoint 6 and 7

- 4.3.20 Viewpoints 6 and 7 are located on St Albans Road to the west of the Site at a distance of approx. 1km and represents users of the local road who will experience transient and oblique in the general direction of the Site. See Figures 6 and 7. Figure 7 also represents several dwellings that front St Albans Road and are orientated towards the Site.
- 4.3.21 Notwithstanding the National Cycle Route, visual receptors at this location comprise local road users, considered to be of **Low** sensitivity, noting the hedgerow contained nature of the roadway, limiting visual interest and amenity afforded out in to the wider landscape, where the primary focus is on the direction of travel. Additional receptors include nearby residents (**Medium** sensitivity – upper floor rooms / rooms not usually frequented in daylight hours & **High** sensitivity - residents in frequently used ground rooms and property curtilages) who will have direct and medium-range views towards the Site from both ground and upper floor windows of the dwellings.
- 4.3.22 The baseline view from both locations on St Albans Road is rural in nature across open arable fields to the west of the Site. Field boundary hedgerows vary in size and management, with many overgrown to



become a linear belt of hedgerow trees. In combination with existing woodland blocks and the undulating topography of the landscape, these hedgerows assist in limiting views in the general direction of the Site. In the background are the hills to the east of the Site and Codicote Road and include the elevated landscape of Danesbury Park. Occasional detractors in the views include glimpsed view of a limited number of dwellings to the east, and limited electrical and telecommunications infrastructure. The Site itself is not visible within any views.

4.3.23 Upon completion (Year 1), the Proposed Development will not be visible to users of the local road network or to the existing dwellings fronting St Albans Road. As a result, the magnitude of change is considered as being **None** and the overall level of effect is assessed as being **None-Neutral**. During winter months, when trees and vegetation are without leaf and visibility is generally increased, the layering of the existing woodland and hedgerow are considered to be of a depth that none of the development will be visible as a result and the level of assessment remains the same.

Table 8: Visual Effects on Viewpoint 6 and 7

Visual Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude		Nature and Importance of Effect
St Albans Road	Low	Upon Completion (at Year 1)	None	None-Neutral
		Year 10 (planting established)	None	None-Neutral
Residents (Ground floor rooms)	High	Upon Completion (at Year 1)	None	None-Neutral
		Year 10 (planting established)	None	None-Neutral
Residents (First floor rooms)	Medium	Upon Completion (at Year 1)	None	None-Neutral
		Year 10 (planting established)	None	None-Neutral

Individual Visual Effects on Viewpoint 8

4.3.24 Viewpoint 8 is located on PRow Footpath Codicote 023 at a distance of approx. 1.25km to the south-west of the Site. See Figure L9. Visual receptors at this location are considered to associate a high value with the view, which is rural in character and relatively tranquil, and the sensitivity of users of this footpath is assessed as High.

4.3.25 The baseline view is from an elevated position where the footpath is broadly aligned with the Site and follows the base of a shallow valley. The view extends across a series of arable fields from the foreground into the middle distance. It is framed by an existing field boundary hedgerow to the left and a small hillock to the right, focusing views along the valley in the general direction of the Site. The extent of woodlands, field boundary hedgerows and trees along the River Mimram provide the impression of a well vegetated landscape and in combination with the noticeable changes in landform, screen views of existing development to such an extent that only occasional dwellings are visible. The Site itself is visible although predominantly limited to existing buildings within the western areas.

4.3.26 Upon completion (Year 1), the Proposed Development will be partially visible (replacing the existing built form at the Site), with dwellings to the western edge of the Site visible to varying degrees, with dwellings to the centre and eastern edges screened by existing tree cover. Retained trees and hedgerows along the



western boundary, supplemented with new areas of planting will mitigate views so that only filtered views will remain. At Year 1, the magnitude of change is assessed as being **Very Small - Small** and the overall level of effect as **Moderate** adverse at worst in winter. While existing and proposed vegetation is unlikely to fully screen the upper storeys of the proposed dwellings, it would contribute to assimilating the built form into the wider landscape structure, gradually reducing the perceived level of adverse effect as it matures.

4.3.27 This would also remain the case in winter months and at Year 10, noting that as the proposals are perceptibly integrated in to the landscape over time, the residual effect will have likely reduced to Minor-Moderate.

Table 9: Visual Effects on Viewpoint 8

Visual Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude		Nature and Importance of Effect
PRoW Footpath Codicote 023	High	Upon Completion (at Year 1)	Very Small - Small	Moderate adverse
		Year 10 (planting established)	Very Small - Small	Minor-Moderate

Other Visual Receptors

54 Codicote Road

4.3.28 This property lies to the west of Codicote Road and is immediately adjacent the north-east corner of the Site and users will have views of the Site from south-facing windows. It is unclear if the property is a series of apartments or flats or used as an office building, so for this assessment it will be treated as a dwelling, with views from both upper floors (medium sensitivity receptors) and ground floor / curtilage areas (high sensitivity receptors). This property will experience views similar to those shown at Viewpoint 1 (Figure L2).

4.3.29 The orientation of this building to the south-east means that receptors currently experience baseline views along the eastern boundary, which include small areas of pastoral grassland, Codicote Road and adjacent housing, with views to the centre of the Site screened by an overgrown low-level grass embankment and a number of mature trees with some understorey vegetation.

4.3.30 Upon completion (Year 1), the Proposed Development will replace views of the horse paddock with close-range views of car parking, rear gardens and the rear elevations of new dwellings, supplemented with new planting. Views along Codicote Road will likely be reduced as a result. The magnitude of change is assessed as Large, reflecting the substantial alteration to the existing outlook experienced at close range. The overall level of adverse effect is assessed as being Major adverse for ground floor receptors and Moderate-Major adverse for upper floor receptors at Year 1.

4.3.31 Whilst the effect on visual amenity is assessed as Major adverse at worst due to the substantial change in outlook experienced at close range, this conclusion relates principally to the alteration of the existing view rather than any unacceptable overbearing, dominant or enclosing relationship. The Proposed Development would comply with accepted separation distances and would not be considered overbearing in terms typically applied within Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) guidance. Furthermore, there is no planning right to retain an existing private view.

4.3.32 The Proposed Development also includes new boundary planting, including a hedgerow along the site boundary adjacent to the property. As this vegetation establishes and matures, it will increasingly filter and partially screen views of the proposed dwellings, car parking and garden areas. Whilst not removing views entirely, the planting will soften the perception of built form and reduce the prominence of the development within the outlook from the property. Consequently, the magnitude of change and level of adverse effect would reduce over time as the proposed landscape mitigation becomes established.

Cumulative Visual Impacts and Effects

4.3.33 The Site has limited intervisibility with the surrounding area, and no cumulative impacts are identified.

Summary of Visual Effects

4.3.34 Table 10 summarises the assessment of visual effects of the Proposed Development.

Table 10: Summary of Assessed Visual Impact

VP No.	Receptors Represented	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Effect		Overall level of Effect	
			Upon Completion (at Year 1)	Year 10 (planting established)	Construction	Occupation
1	Codicote Road	Low	Medium	Small	Minor-Moderate adverse	Minor adverse
	Dwellings (Ground Floor Rooms)	High	Medium	Small	Moderate – Major adverse	Moderate adverse
	Dwellings (Upper Floor Rooms)	Medium	Medium	Small	Moderate adverse	Minor adverse
2	Codicote Road	Low	Medium	Small	Minor-Moderate adverse	Minor adverse
	Dwellings (Ground Floor Rooms)	High	Medium	Small	Moderate – Major adverse	Moderate adverse
	Dwellings (Upper Floor Rooms)	Medium	Medium	Small	Moderate adverse	Minor adverse
3	Informal footpath within Danesbury Park	High	None	None	None	None
4	PRoW Footpath Codicote 044	High	None	None	None-Neutral	None



5	Kimpton Road	Low	None	None	None-Neutral	None
6	St Albans Road	Low	None	None	None-Neutral	None
7	St Albans Road	Low	None	None	None-Neutral	None
	Dwellings (Ground Floor)	High	None	None	None-Neutral	None
	Dwellings (Upper Floors)	Med	None	None	None-Neutral	None
8	PRoW Footpath Codicote 023	High	Very Small - Small	Very Small - Small	Moderate Adverse	Minor-Moderate Adverse



5. Conclusions

5.1 Landscape and Visual Effects

- 5.1.1 This assessment combines objective methodology with informed professional judgement, in accordance with the latest guidance, and has been reviewed by a Chartered Landscape Architect.
- 5.1.2 The landscape character of the Site and the Danesbury Settled Slopes Landscape Character Area (LCA 133a) is assessed as having a Medium-High sensitivity to the type of development proposed. The Site lies on the north-western edge of Welwyn, and to the west of the B656 Codicote Road, and is influenced by residential development to the east and its former use as a plant nursery. These existing elements diminish the rural character of the Site, contributing to a semi-urban fringe context.
- 5.1.3 The Proposed Development would introduce additional built form, infrastructure, and planting, resulting in the loss of some existing tree cover and areas of both rough and semi-improved grassland. The Site is moderately well enclosed, with boundary vegetation offering a degree of visual containment from surrounding areas. As such, the perceived extent of change from nearby areas would be limited. The resulting effect on the Site's landscape character is assessed as Moderate adverse, and Minor adverse for the wider LCA. These effects would be most noticeable in the early years before new planting matures. Over time, the proposed planting would positively contribute to the already established and retained landscape fabric and character by enhancing green infrastructure and improving the visual integration of the development into the surrounding landscape.
- 5.1.4 Views of the Proposed Development would be restricted to a limited number of locations, primarily at close range, with the exception of mid-distance filtered views from higher ground to the southwest (Viewpoint 8). While there is no private 'right to a view,' visual amenity impacts for nearby residents can be a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 5.1.5 The Site is located within the Green Belt. From a landscape and visual perspective, the Site displays characteristics commonly associated with a contained urban-edge location, being closely related to existing development along Codicote Road and enclosed by substantial vegetation. The Site makes a limited visual contribution to the perception of the wider countryside and the influence of the Proposed Development would remain localised. Given the extent of existing vegetation within and around the Site, together with the enclosure provided by local topography and adjacent woodland blocks, there is limited intervisibility with the wider landscape and the Site generally reads as part of the existing settlement edge rather than the wider open countryside. Consequently, the development would not result in widespread landscape change nor materially alter the character or experience of the wider rural landscape surrounding Welwyn and Codicote.
- 5.1.6 Notable effects are anticipated for some residents of the dwellings that lie to the east of Codicote Road and immediately adjacent to the north-east corner of the Site, where Moderate-Major adverse effects may occur at Year 1 due to the proximity of new development. Views from Public Rights of Way (PRoW's) are primarily limited to a section of Footpath Codicote 023 to the south-west where an elevated section of the footpath is aligned with the Site, before it turns and continues into a shallow valley. The worst-case level of effect for users of this footpath is assessed as Moderate adverse at Year 1, observed from a location that is elevated with open views of the western edge of the Site and where filtered views of the



Proposed Development are considered likely. Over time, the establishment of proposed planting would help to integrate the development into the local landscape context, reducing visual effects for both residents and PRow users.

- 5.1.7 Winter views, when deciduous vegetation is not in leaf, have been considered. While visibility of the Proposed Development would be marginally increased, this would not materially alter the overall assessment of effects, which would remain broadly consistent with summer conditions (refer to individual viewpoint assessments).
- 5.1.8 In conclusion, the landscape in the vicinity of the Site and the wider area is considered to have the capacity to accommodate the scale and nature of the Proposed Development without overriding adverse visual or landscape effects.



6. References

Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2002) Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland. Cheltenham and Edinburgh: Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage.

Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government (2024) National Planning Policy Framework. London: DLUHC.

Landscape Institute (2016) Landscape Character Assessment – Technical Information Note 08/2015. London: Landscape Institute.

Landscape Institute (2017) Tranquillity – An Overview. Technical Information Note 01/2017 (Revised). London: Landscape Institute.

Landscape Institute (2019) Visual Representation of Development Proposals. Technical Guidance Note 06/19. London: Landscape Institute.

Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. 3rd Edition. London: Routledge.

Natural England (2014) An Approach to Landscape Character. York: Natural England.

Natural England (2025) National Character Area Profile 110: Chilterns. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications> (Accessed June 2026).

Natural England (2025) National Character Area Profile 111: Northern Thames Basin. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications> (Accessed June 2026).

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (2005) Welwyn Hatfield Landscape Character Assessment.

Hertfordshire County Council (2026) Rights of Way Interactive Map. Available at: <https://webmaps.hertfordshire.gov.uk/row/row.htm> (Accessed May 2026).

National Cycle Network (2026) National Cycle Network Interactive Map. Available at: <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/national-cycle-network> (Accessed May 2026).



7. Abbreviations/Acronyms:

For the avoidance of confusion, abbreviations used have the meanings given below:

AGL	Above Ground Level	NRW	Natural Resources Wales
AGLV	Area of Great Landscape Value	OS	Ordnance Survey
AOD	Above Ordnance Datum	POS	Public Open Space
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	PDL	Previously Developed Land
AVR	Accurate Visual Representation	RCA	Regional Character Area
c.	Circa	RIGS	Regionally Important Geological Site
CWS	County Wildlife Site	SAC	Special Conservation Area
DEM	Digital Elevation Model	SAM	Scheduled Ancient Monument
DSM	Digital Surface Model	SEPA	Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
DTM	Digital Terrain Model	SPP	Scottish Planning Policy
EA	Environment Agency	SINC	Site of Importance for Nature Conservation
FOV	Field of View	SLINC	Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation
GIS	Geographical Information System	SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
LCA	Landscape Character Area	TAN	Technical Advice Note
LCT	Landscape Character Type	TPO	Tree Preservation Order
LNR	Local Nature Reserve	VEM	Visual Envelope Map
LPA	Local Planning Authority	VP	Viewpoint (Representative Viewpoint)
LVA	Landscape and Visual Appraisal	WPA	Waste Planning Authority
LVIA	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment	ZVI	Zone of Visual Influence
LWS	Local Wildlife Site	ZTV	Zone of Theoretical Visibility
MPA	Mineral Planning Authority	ZPV	Zone of Primary Visibility
NCA	National Character Area	ZSV	Zone of Secondary Visibility
NGR	National Grid Reference		
NNR	National Nature Reserve		
NSA	National Scenic Area		
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework		
NPPG	National Planning Policy Guidance		



8. Glossary:

For the avoidance of confusion, the terms used in this report follow the definitions given below:

Landscape	An area, as perceived by people (in relation to past experiences, education etc.), whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors. Landscape may comprise areas of rural land, urban fringe, urban land (townscape), coastal land, the sea (seascape) etc.
Townscape	The character and composition of the built environment including the buildings and the relationships between them, the different types of urban open space, including green spaces, and the relationship between buildings and open spaces.
Seascape	Landscapes with views of the coast or seas, and coasts and adjacent marine environments with cultural, historical and archaeological links with each other.
Landscape Element	A component part of the landscape (e.g., landform, roads, hedges, woods).
Landscape Feature	A prominent eye-catching element (e.g., wooded hilltop or church spire).
Landscape Characteristics	Combinations of elements and experiential characteristics (e.g., noise, smell) that make a particular contribution to a Landscape Character Type.
Landscape Receptor	Defined aspects of the landscape that have the potential to be affected by a Proposed Development.
Landscape Scene	The landscape characteristics discernible from a given viewpoint/location. The visual aspects of this can be illustrated in a static two-dimensional manner in photographs to represent a sample view of the landscape scene.
Landscape Character	The distinct recognisable pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular landscape and how people perceive this, creating a particular sense of place.
Landscape Character Types	LCTs refer to multiple areas of the same character.
Landscape Character Areas	LCAs refer to specific geographical locations of a particular character type. These can be described and categorised at different scales depending on criteria used.
Landscape Condition	The strength of expression of landscape character and intactness of constituent characteristic elements from visual, functional, ecological and cultural perspectives. This is not the same as Scenic Beauty.
Landscape Capacity	The threshold at which change to the landscape resource results in significant change to its landscape character. This is directly related to landscape sensitivity.
Landscape Susceptibility	The ability of a defined landscape receptor (e.g. landscape characteristics) to accommodate the specific Proposed Development without undue negative consequences.
Landscape Value	The desirability of landscape characteristics (including scenic beauty, tranquillity, wildness, cultural associations, conservation interests etc.) and the acceptability of their loss to different stakeholders (i.e. valued for different reasons by different people and on different scales, e.g. local, national).
Landscape Sensitivity	The level of stability, robustness and resilience of landscape receptors and their ability to be replicated based on their quality, condition and value. Landscape sensitivity is based on a combination of judgements on landscape susceptibility and landscape value.
Landscape Receptor	Landscape element, characteristic or character that would potentially receive/experience an effect.
Visual Receptor	Individuals, special interest groups, a community or population that would potentially experience an effect on their view.



Scenic Beauty / Scenic Quality	Subjective value attributed to the emotional response of an individual to a landscape scene, which, although heavily influenced by intrinsic condition, is also conditioned by an individual's perception (memories, associations, cultural influences and preference).
Visual Amenity	The subjective value attributed to the degree of pleasure gained from what is seen in a given view (quality of view).
Visual Sensitivity	The estimated level of susceptibility or likely viewer's response to a change in view from a given viewpoint in relation to its context, the existing visual amenity, the activity and expectations of the viewer and the number of viewers affected.
Tranquillity	Subjective experience from being at a location that provides individuals with the space and conditions to relax, achieve mental balance and a sense of distance from stress. Tranquil areas are often associated with quiet, remote (or appearing remote), natural, non-developed (non-built) and non-busy areas.
Impacts and Effects	' Impact ' refers to an action being taken, and an ' effect ' is the change resulting from that action. The process of assessing effects arising from development is commonly referred to as 'impact assessment'. 'Impacts' and 'effects' are often used interchangeably.
Significant Effect	Directive 2011/92/EU (The assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment) requires member states to assess the likely significant effects of a project (e.g. development) on the environment before determining whether consent should be given. This requirement has been transposed via Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations. This LVIA refers to significance (or level) of effects in the wider sense, to mean positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse) environmental effects that are important (material) considerations in the decision-making process, whether assessed as part of an EIA or otherwise. This is directly related to set criteria and terminology as set out within the assessment process. Significant effects may, on balance with other considerations, be acceptable or unacceptable in overall planning terms.
Site Visibility	The areas within which the subject site can be seen, the amount of site visible and the numbers able to see the subject site.
Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)	Also known as a Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI), Visual Envelope Map (VEM) and Viewshed. This represents the area over which a development can theoretically be seen, based on a DTM. The ZTV usually presents a 'bare ground' scenario - that is, a landscape without screening structures or vegetation. This information is usually presented upon a map base.
Zone of Primary Visibility (ZPV)	The Zone of Primary Visibility (ZPV) represents the geographical area from which the Proposed Development would represent a notable new element in the view and therefore where significant landscape and/or visual effects are likely to occur without further consideration (e.g., secondary mitigation).
Zone of Secondary Visibility (ZSV)	A Zone of Secondary Visibility (ZSV) can be used to represent the geographical area from which the Proposed Development may be visible without being a notable new element in the view or where views are partly restricted or are from greater distances, and therefore where significant landscape and/or visual effects are unlikely to occur after Primary Mitigation measures have been taken into account.
Digital Terrain Model (DTM)	Also known as a digital elevation model (DEM). This is a digital representation of the ground surface (landform or terrain) created by linking co-ordinate points of surveyed elevation values to create a 3D 'model' which computers can use to undertake calculations relating to slope angles, point visibility, flood risk etc.
Digital Surface Model (DSM)	As per a DTM except that it relates to the levels of surfaces above the ground where present (e.g. vegetation or roof levels).
Field of View (FOV)	Term used to describe the height and width of a view as represented by an image. These constitute the horizontal field of view and vertical field of view and are expressed as angles in degrees. Humans have an extreme horizontal field of view of about 200°, but only 6-10° will be in focus at any one time. Thus, a viewer moves their eyes and head around to see a view over a wide area.
Enhancement	A measure resulting in a beneficial effect which is not related to any adverse effect.
Mitigation	A measure to avoid, reduce or remedy adverse effects (principally significant effects) caused by the proposed development. These may be defined at Primary and Secondary Mitigation measures.
Primary (1°) Mitigation	Mitigation measures which have either been developed through the iterative design process and which have become integrated or embedded into the project design or are commitments to utilise best practice techniques to avoid or minimise adverse effects (e.g. industry best practice guidance on construction).



Secondary (2°) Mitigation	Mitigation measures that have been designed to address any adverse effects remaining after Primary Mitigation measures have been incorporated into the project design (i.e. residual adverse effects).
------------------------------	--

