

Direct Effects on hedgerows, trees and woodland		
Landscape Value	Landscape Susceptibility	Landscape Sensitivity
High to Medium	High to Medium	High to Medium
Existing Condition		
The Site contains several hedgerows and trees within the internal field boundaries, as well as areas of woodland. As show in the Arboricultural Survey in Appendix 11.7, much of the vegetation is category A or B. There are also several areas of Ancient Woodland on and adjoining the Site.		
Construction (Winter)	Magnitude of Change	Effect
Areas of woodland, trees and hedgerows will be removed within the western part of the Site under the pylons, in order to create the vehicular access point. No Ancient Woodland will be removed, although the Proposed Development will encroach into the 15m offset from the Ancient Woodland at the access. It is anticipated that a further 3 trees and sections of hedgerow will require removal to facilitate movement within the development. The existing retained vegetation will be protected during the construction with harass fencing, as set out in detail within the Arboricultural Impact Statement in Appendix 11.7. Much new native hedgerow, thicket and woodland planting is proposed, which will be planted during the construction period.	Low	Moderate to Minor Adverse Not Significant
Operation Year 1 (Winter)	Magnitude of Change	Effect
As above, and the new planting would be completed.	Low	Moderate to Minor Adverse Not Significant
Operation Year 15 (Summer)	Magnitude of Change	Effect
As above, however, the new planting would have matured and become part of the wider habitats within the development. The management regimes would also have been implemented and the condition of the retained vegetation would have improved.	Low	Minor Beneficial Not Significant
Direct Effects on land at Site, i.e. arable and grassland fields		
Landscape Value	Landscape Susceptibility	Landscape Sensitivity
Medium	Medium	Medium
Existing Condition		
The Site comprises a series of arable fields, as well as two fields of grassland, set amongst the woodlands. One field of grass is neutral grassland which is used for pasture at times, but the remainder of the Site is actively farmed. An area of public open space comprising amenity and long grass areas occurs in the far west of the Site, under the pylons.		
Construction (Winter)	Magnitude of Change	Effect
The amenity grassland, arable fields and temporary grassland area will be removed and will become a construction site. The neutral grassland at Dell Spring will be retained and protected from construction activities with harass fencing and as per an agreed Construction Management Plan.	High	Moderate Adverse Significant
Operation Year 1 (Winter)	Magnitude of Change	Effect
The amenity grassland, arable fields and temporary grassland area will become a residential neighbourhood with associated open space and infrastructure. New areas of long grass and meadows will be created, and the grassland at Dell Spring will be managed.	High	Moderate Adverse Significant
Operation Year 15 (Summer)	Magnitude of Change	Effect
As above, although the proposed and retained grassland would have matured and become managed.	High	Moderate Adverse Significant

Direct Effects on Public Rights of Way		
Landscape Value	Landscape Susceptibility	Landscape Sensitivity
High	Medium	High to Medium
Existing Condition Bridleway Weston 033 (also known as Bay Lane) which runs south west to north east along the south eastern boundary of the Site. This provides an east to west connection from Dane End Farm, through the Site and Great Ashby passing close to the District Centre, St Nicholas Park and the Pin Green employment area. This is a key connecting corridor and, in conjunction with the development of Site GA1, provides the opportunity to have a continuous link from the Hertfordshire Way and Back Lane to Warrens Green Lane. Footpath Weston 029 which runs north west to south east through the south western half of the Site, connecting Tile Kiln Farm to Bridleway Weston 033 (above) and linking to Footpath Weston 031/Walkern 022 which provides an onward connection to the Beane Valley east of Stevenage. Footpath Weston 044 which delineates the north eastern boundary of GA2. Footpath Weston 027 which delineates the north western boundary of GA2 linking Back Lane and Tile Kiln Farm to Warrens Green Lane. Footpath Great Ashby 011 which connects from Great Ashby District Centre across the pylon/proposed access corridor to the south western edge of the Site. Footpath Weston 026 connecting from Merrick Close along the eastern edge of Tile Kiln Wood, traversing the northern end of GA2 to the junction of Back Lane and Warrens Green Lane.		
Construction (Winter)	Magnitude of Change	Effect
It is expected that the majority of rights of way on the Site will be closed or diverted temporarily during stages of the construction activity. The paths will be rerouted through corridors bound by harras fencing, and a Construction Management Plan will be adhered to.	High	Major to Moderate Adverse Significant
Operation Year 1 (Winter)	Magnitude of Change	Effect
The public rights of way will either be retained along their current alignment, or slightly diverted in order to lead along the new footways within the development. Most of the paths will be surfaced to allow an expected increase in use. The paths will be crossed by roads, and at these locations, safe crossing points will be designed into the scheme. Many new recreational paths will also be provided within the development, which would link to the PROWs.	Medium	Minor Adverse Not Significant
Operation Year 15 (Summer)	Magnitude of Change	Effect
As for year 1	Medium	Minor Adverse Not Significant

Landscape Character of the Site		
Landscape Value	Landscape Susceptibility	Landscape Sensitivity
High to Medium	Medium to Low	Medium
Existing Condition The Site comprises ordinary arable and grassland fields bound by hedgerows and woodland blocks. The Site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory designations for landscape or heritage value or quality. However, it does include Local Wildlife Sites (New Spring and Brooches Wood) on its periphery, as well as woodland blocks which are noted to have ancient woodland indicators through ecological survey work, indicating some value in relation to natural heritage. A collection of listed buildings can be found adjacent to the Site at Tile Kiln Farm and Dane End, although the Site plays no substantial role in their significance, and there is no known specific cultural heritage role played by the Site. The landscape condition of the Site is ordinary. A double row of overhead powerlines and pylons cross the Site from east to west, creating a dominant visual intrusion and strong detractor from the Site's mainly rural character. The western part of the Site has some urbanising influences from the adjacent settlement of Great Ashby. The majority of trees on Site are of high (category A) or moderate (category B) quality. We are not aware of any associations that would elevate its value. The Site is not particularly distinctive, with woodland blocks also occurring within the wider area around the Site. There are no rare or unusual features which would elevate the value of the Site, nor are there distinctive features which are out of the ordinary or particularly good examples of characteristics. A network of PRoW cross the Site, including part of the Hertfordshire Way promoted walking route. While there are some longer views available from within the Site, these are characteristic of the area and not of specific value. The rolling landform is also characteristic. While the Site is relatively scenic, it is not out of the ordinary in terms of its scenic value. The Site is not tranquil or wild and is not a rare landscape type. The Site plays no particular landscape function which would elevate its value. Overall, the Site is assessed as being of medium to high landscape value, as a result of the PRoW network, including the Hertfordshire Way, the blocks of ancient woodland and locally important ecological sites. The Site is gently undulating with frequent woodland blocks and vegetation coverage which largely contains the Proposed Development from the wider landscape. The Site is adjoined by housing at Great Ashby to the west and has a good ability to accommodate residential development without the need for significant vegetation removal. As such, the Site is considered to have a medium to low landscape susceptibility. Overall, the Site is assessed as being of medium landscape sensitivity.		
Construction (Winter)	Magnitude of Change	Effect
Construction of the Proposed Development would take place across the Site. The majority of existing vegetation, including hedgerows and woodland blocks would be retained and protected during the construction stage, although some sections would be removed to accommodate access and movement within the Site. PRoW within the Site are likely to be temporarily re-routed or closed for short periods at a time. Construction activities, including movement of vehicles, cranes, earthworks, fencing and layout of development would be temporary, but would represent a change to the character of the Site which was otherwise open in nature. A CEMP would be in place to mitigate construction effects.	High	Major Adverse Significant
Operation Year 1 (Winter)	Magnitude of Change	Effect
The character of the Site would change from arable and grassland fields with woodland blocks, to an area of residential development interspersed between existing woodland and hedgerows alongside new areas of public open space. The new homes would be designed to reflect the scale and character of the existing settlement, as well as responding to more sensitive edges, for example interfaces with listed buildings and along the rural fringe. New streets and open spaces would be designed to be attractive public spaces. The majority of structural vegetation on the Site is proposed to be retained and would be managed to enhance its ecological value. This includes the creation of new buffer zones around areas of ancient woodland and the use of fencing to deter unmanaged public access. Much new native tree, thicket and hedgerow planting, as well as areas of meadows and wetland habitats are proposed within the open spaces, as is an orchard and allotments. The layout has been designed to respect some longer views south. While the effect is judged as adverse (mostly as a result of the loss of the open land), that does not mean the development will be unattractive or unsuitable. In fact, the proposed development will be well-designed and attractive, and will offer social and ecological benefits on the Site.	High	Major to Moderate Adverse Significant
Operation Year 15 (Summer)	Magnitude of Change	Effect
The change would be as above, however, as the Proposed Development and new planting matures and becomes integrated into the Site and its surroundings, the adverse effect would become reduced, particularly during summer when vegetation is in leaf.	High	Moderate Adverse Significant

NCA 86: South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland		
Landscape Value	Landscape Susceptibility	Landscape Sensitivity
Medium	Medium	Medium
Existing Condition		
Key characteristics identified within the published study include: • <i>An undulating chalky boulder clay plateau is dissected by numerous river valleys, giving a topography of gentle slopes in the lower, wider valleys and steeper slopes in the narrower upper parts.</i> • <i>Fragments of chalk give many of the soils a calcareous character, which also influences the character of the semi-natural vegetation cover.</i> • <i>South-east-flowing streams and rivers drain the clay plateau. Watercourses wind slowly across flood plains, supporting wet, fen-type habitats; grazing marsh; and blocks of cricket-bat willows, poplars and old willow pollards. Navigation locks are present on some rivers.</i> • <i>Lowland wood pasture and ancient woodlands support the dormouse and a rich diversity of flowering plants on the clay plateau. Large, often ancient hedgerows link woods and copses, forming wooded skylines.</i> • <i>The agricultural landscape is predominantly arable with a wooded appearance. There is some pasture on the valley floors. Field patterns are irregular despite rationalisation, with much ancient countryside surviving. Field margins support corn bunting, cornflower and brown hare.</i> • <i>There is a dispersed settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads, parishes and small settlements around 'tyes' (commons) or strip greens and isolated hamlets. The NCA features a concentration of isolated moated farmsteads and numerous well-preserved medieval towns and large villages.</i> • <i>Larger 20th-century development has taken place to the south and east around Chelmsford, Ipswich and the new towns of Harlow and Stevenage.</i> • <i>Traditional timber-frame, often elaborate buildings with exposed timbers, colour-washed render, pargeting and</i> • <i>Winding, narrow and sometimes sunken lanes are bounded by deep ditches, wide verges and strong hedgerows. Transport infrastructure includes the A14, A12, M11 and Stansted Airport.</i> • <i>A strong network of public rights of way provides access to the area's archetypal lowland English countryside.</i>		
Construction (Winter)	Magnitude of Change	Effect
A very small part of the NCA will experience construction activities due to the Proposed Development, however, considering the scale of the NCA and that of the Proposed Development, there will be no material impacts.	Negligible to None	Negligible Adverse to None Not significant
Operation Year 1 (Winter)	Magnitude of Change	Effect
A very small part of the NCA will change from agricultural land to housing, which is also characteristic of the NCA.	Negligible to None	Negligible Adverse to None Not significant
Operation Year 15 (Summer)	Magnitude of Change	Effect
The new development will form a logical part of the NCA which is in keeping with the character, and there will therefore be no impact to the overall character of the NCA.	Neutral	Neutral Not significant

LCA 220: Weston Park		
Landscape Value	Landscape Susceptibility	Landscape Sensitivity
High to Medium	Medium to Low	Medium
Existing Condition Key characteristics identified within the published study include: • <i>“Plateau landform;</i> • <i>Arable land use;</i> • <i>Extensive mature woodland cover;</i> • <i>Interlocking pattern of fields, lanes and curvilinear boundaries;</i> • <i>Scattered farmsteads;</i> • <i>Winding lanes; and</i> • <i>Mature field and hedgerow trees.”</i> The published study notes distinctive features to be: • <i>“Weston Park;</i> • <i>Pylon on southern boundary; and</i> • <i>Abuts northern edge of Stevenage”</i>		
Construction (Winter)	Magnitude of Change	Effect
A small part of the LCA would become a temporary construction site for the northern half of the Site, with construction activities perceptible from only parts of the LCA located within the Site and its immediate surroundings. This is due to the gentle undulations of the plateau landform and extensive woodland coverage to the west, north and east. Due to the scale of the LCA and the fact construction would occur in a very small portion of its southern edge, the impacts would be limited.	Low	Minor Adverse Not significant
Operation Year 1 (Winter)	Magnitude of Change	Effect
A small part of the LCA would change from open arable fields and woodland blocks to housing development and associated open space interspersed between woodland blocks. Much of the key characteristics of the LCA would be unaffected. Existing woodland and field boundary vegetation would be retained and enhanced, helping to contain the Proposed Development from most of the LCA. An area of arable land in the north of the Site would be improved and enhanced to create a new area of neutral grassland which would be publicly accessible from the Hertfordshire Way. The location of the change on the edge of Great Ashby / Stevenage, which is a distinctive feature of the LCA, further limits the impact.	Low	Minor Adverse Not significant
Operation Year 15 (Summer)	Magnitude of Change	Effect
As above, although over time, the Proposed Development would become increasingly more assimilated into the wider context due to vegetation maturing and being in leaf, reducing the impacts slightly.	Low to Negligible	Minor to Negligible Adverse Not significant

LCA 39: Middle Bean Valle		
Landscape Value	Landscape Susceptibility	Landscape Sensitivity
High to Medium	Medium to Low	Medium
Existing Condition The key characteristics are: • <i>“Strongly undulating west-facing slope;</i> • <i>Sharp transition to ridge to the east and to urban edge to the west;</i> • <i>Built edge of Stevenage generally well concealed and contained by mature and semi mature woodland;</i> • <i>Woods located to the tributary valley heads and on the upper slopes adjacent to Stevenage;</i> • <i>Well-managed hornbeam coppice woodland;</i> • <i>Large fields and arable cultivation;</i> • <i>Few settlements; and</i> • <i>Expansive views from the edges to the Beane Valley.”</i>		
Construction (Winter)	Magnitude of Change	Effect
No construction would take place in the LCA. However, there may be very limited perception of construction activities taking place from within the far south-east of the LCA due to the potential for some audible intrusion and for some taller plant to be seen through bare branches of intervening vegetation during winter.	Negligible	Negligible Adverse Not significant
Operation Year 1 (Winter)	Magnitude of Change	Effect
The Proposed Development would not directly affect the character of this LCA, nor would be it be perceptible from the vast majority of the LCA. There is the views of a small portion of new built form within the south of the Site from parts of the north west of the LCA, however, this is from an LCA where the suburban edge of Stevenage is already a key driver of its character. For most of the LCA, there would be no perceptible change.	Negligible	Negligible Adverse Not significant
Operation Year 15 (Summer)	Magnitude of Change	Effect
As above, although over time, the Proposed Development would become increasingly more assimilated into the wider context due to vegetation maturing and being in leaf, reducing the impacts slightly.	Negligible	Negligible Adverse Not significant

LCA 210: Baldock Gap		
Landscape Value	Landscape Susceptibility	Landscape Sensitivity
High to Medium	Medium to Low	Medium
Existing Condition Key characteristics identified within the published study include: • <i>“Undulating chalk scarp with local steep sided valleys;</i> • <i>Large arable fields;</i> • <i>Small, occasional plantations, or shelter belts; and</i> • <i>Small sunken lanes and footpaths climbing up the slope.”</i> The published study notes distinctive features to be: • <i>“B197 Roman road cuts across the contours;</i> • <i>Abuts suburban edge to Baldock in the north and Stevenage in the south;</i> • <i>Small reservoirs and telecommunications masts;</i> • <i>Caravan park to north of Graveley; and</i> • <i>Rooks Nest House (setting for Howards End), is identified within an area known as Forster Country.”</i>		
Construction (Winter)	Magnitude of Change	Effect
No construction would take place in the LCA. However, there may be very limited perception of construction activities taking place from within the far south-east of the LCA due to the potential for some audible intrusion and for some taller plant to be seen through bare branches of intervening vegetation during winter.	Negligible to None	Negligible Adverse to None Not significant
Operation Year 1 (Winter)	Magnitude of Change	Effect
The Proposed Development would not directly affect the character of this LCA, nor would be it be perceptible from the vast majority of the LCA. There is the potential for heavily filtered views of a small portion of new built form within the north-west of the Site from isolated areas along the south-eastern edge of the LCA, however, this is from an LCA where the suburban edge of Stevenage is already a key driver of its character. For most of the LCA, there would be no perceptible change.	Negligible to None	Negligible Adverse to None Not significant
Operation Year 15 (Summer)	Magnitude of Change	Effect
During the summer, intervening vegetation would be in leaf, meaning there would be no perception of the Proposed Development and therefore no change to the LCA.	Neutral	Neutral Not significant

LCA 221: Upper Beane Valley Tributaries		
Landscape Value	Landscape Susceptibility	Landscape Sensitivity
Medium	Medium	Medium
Existing Condition Key characteristics identified within the published study include: • <i>“Bowl like landform comprising steeply sloping chalk valley sides incised by a network of water courses;</i> • <i>Arable land use;</i> • <i>Irregular pattern, of medium to large sized fields;</i> • <i>Scattered hedgerows and waterside trees;</i> • <i>Small blocks of relict Ancient Woodland on the upper slopes; and</i> • <i>Sparse settlement.”</i> The published study notes distinctive features to be: • <i>“Extensive area of former common land; and</i> • <i>Pylon lines cut across the valley.”</i>		
Construction (Winter)	Magnitude of Change	Effect
No construction would take place in the LCA. Construction activity is unlikely to be perceived from the LCA due to the intervening distance, however, there may be some audible intrusion along the south-western edge of the LCA.	Negligible to None	Negligible Adverse to None Not significant
Operation Year 1 (Winter)	Magnitude of Change	Effect
The Proposed Development would not directly affect the character of the LCA, nor is it likely to be perceptible from the LCA.	Neutral	Neutral Not significant
Operation Year 15 (Summer)	Magnitude of Change	Effect
As above, there would be no perception of the Proposed Development and therefore no change to the LCA.	Neutral	Neutral Not significant