Symmetry Park, Ardley

Technical Appendix 9.1: Landscape and Visual Baseline

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On behalf of:
Tritax Symmetry Ardley Ltd

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Section 1
Introduction and Methodology

Introduction and Methodology

1.1 The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP) has been commissioned by Tritax Symmetry Ardley Ltd ('the applicant') to undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) baseline of Symmetry Park, Ardley (the Site) to accompany an outline planning application for employment use under Use Class B8.

1.2 EDP is an independent environmental planning consultancy with offices in Cirencester, Cheltenham and Cardiff. The practice provides advice in the fields of landscape, ecology, archaeology, masterplanning, arboriculture, rights of way and agricultural land matters. Details of the practice can be obtained at our website (www.edp-uk.co.uk).

1.3 EDP is a Registered Practice of the Landscape Institute. The primary purpose of EDP's appointment as chartered landscape architects is to conduct an assessment, in landscape and visual terms, of the effects of the forthcoming proposed development as it has evolved.

Brief Description of the Site and its Context

1.4 The Site is centred approximately at Ordnance Survey Grid Reference SP 55697 28990 and lies within the administrative boundary of Cherwell District Council. In total, the Site, including highway land, covers an area of 83.279 hectares (ha).

1.5 The Site comprises two parcels of land situated either side of the B4100, with the north-western extent of the Site being bound by the A43, and is made up of a series of arable fields enclosed by hedgerows with occasional trees. Within the local context, as is often the case around motorway junctions, for the most part the land in the immediate vicinity of the Site has been severed by the motorway and slip roads, such that the field patterning locally has been lost and the fragments that remain are negatively influenced by the noise and disturbance of the transport route. The latter is particularly the case for the land to the north and east of the Junction, which is doubly influenced by the M40 and the A43. In the main, however, landscape features have been retained with field boundary hedgerows, lining the long straight roads and woodland and boundary trees all creating layers within the local landscape.

1.6 EDP has been providing advice on landscape matters to the applicant since the outset of the design process and in so doing, helping to ensure that the masterplan is as sensitive to its landscape context as possible.

Scope of this Report

1.7 This Landscape and Visual Baseline (LVB) report has been prepared by Chartered Landscape Architects from EDP's landscape team and provides an appreciation of the 'baseline' landscape character and visual amenity context of land at Junction 10, M40, Ardley (the Site). The baseline involved a review of the planning context of the Site, as well as fieldwork conducted by EDP's landscape architects in August and November 2021, and again in February 2024.

1.8 This baseline assessment forms the first of four constituent parts of the full LVIA, which is set out in the following documents:

- **Technical Annex 9.1**: The baseline assessment (this document);
- **Technical Annex 9.2**: Supporting figures;
- **Technical Annex 9.3**: Assessment of effects schedules; and
- **ES Chapter 9**: Landscape and Visual Impact containing a summary of the assessment and baseline.

Purpose

1.9 The purpose of this LVB is to identify the baseline conditions of the Site and surrounding area, and to determine those landscape and visual characteristics which might inform the design of the development proposals, including recommendations for mitigation. The primary purpose of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), and of this LVIA, is to assess the likely (significant) effects of the Application Proposals.

1.10 In compiling the baseline assessment, EDP has undertaken the following key tasks:

- A review of the planning policy context for the Site;
- A desktop study and web search of relevant background documents and maps. EDP's study included reviews of aerial photographs, web searches, Local Planning Authority (LPA) publications and landscape character assessments. EDP has also obtained, where possible, information about relevant landscape and other designations such as National Landscapes (formerly Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)), gardens and parks included on English Heritage's 'Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England' Registered Park and Garden (RPG), Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), Scheduled Monuments (SM), Conservation Areas (CA), and Listed Buildings (LB);
- A field assessment of local Site circumstances, including a photographic survey of the character and fabric of the Site and its surroundings, using photography from a number of representative viewpoints, undertaken by a chartered landscape architect

on 20 August 2021 and again on 24 November 2021, and again in February 2024; and

- An analysis of the likely landscape and visual effects of the proposed scheme, which is determined by combining the magnitude of the predicted change with the assessed sensitivity of the identified receptors. The nature of any predicted effects is also identified (i.e., positive/negative, permanent/reversible).

Methodology Adopted for the Assessment

1.11 The assessment methodology for assessing landscape and visual effects prepared by EDP is principally based on the following best practice guidance:

- *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* – Third Edition (LI/IEMA, 2013); and

- *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment* – (Natural England, 2014).

1.12 This LVIA baseline is comprised of a study of two separate but inter-linked issues:

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

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

1.13 The nature of landscape and visual assessment requires both objective analysis and subjective professional judgement. Accordingly, the following appraisal is based on the best practice guidance listed above, information gathering and field studies. It uses quantifiable factors wherever possible, subjective professional judgement and is based on clearly defined terms. The criteria referred to, but not defined within the guidelines, have been defined by EDP as set out in **Annex EDP 1**, with terms clearly defined within the Glossary at **Annex EDP 2**.

1.14 The methodology adopted comprised a combination of desktop and field studies including the following:

- An overview of statutory plans and other data regarding relevant designations and planning polices for the area;

- A Geographical Information System (GIS) analysis of the Site, using Ordnance Survey (OS) profile data, to establish the topography of the area and Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) of the Site itself;

- An assessment of the landscape character of the Site, together with the sensitivity of the landscape to change;

- Identification of representative viewpoints and classifications of sensitivity; and

- Consideration of the likely potential landscape and visual effects which might result from the proposed scheme options.

1.15 The visual analysis is based on views from external spaces within the public domain and not from inside buildings or private spaces. However, comments have been made in relation to likely views from private dwellings where appropriate. The camera location and details of each viewpoint were recorded.

Study Area

1.16 In order to establish the baseline to inform the assessment of the potential limit of notable effects of the Site, a broad study area was adopted as the initial search area. This enabled the geographical scope of the assessment to be defined and provided the wider geographical context of the study. Within this area, the search focused on identifying the local planning policy context, identifying national and local landscape designations and other relevant designations (e.g. AONBs and RPGs), and providing a general geographical understanding of the Site and its broader context (for example, in relation to landform, transport routes and the distribution and nature of settlement).

1.17 Following this initial analysis and subsequent field work, and having an appreciation of the development proposed, the study area has been refined to focus on those areas and features that are assessed to be likely to be affected by the proposals. The extent of this study area is 3km from the Site boundary, largely due to local topography being gently undulating. Occasional reference may be made to features beyond this 3km area where appropriate. The study areas are illustrated on **Figure 9.1**.

Section 2
Review of Relevant Planning Policy and Designations

Introduction

2.1 An appreciation of the 'weight' to be attributed to any landscape or visual effects arising from development starts with an understanding of the landscape designations and planning context within which any such development is to be tested for its acceptability.

2.2 EDP has conducted a data trawl of these relevant designations, the findings of which are set out below and the locations of which are illustrated on **Figure 9.1**.

Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

2.3 At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework ((NPPF), updated December 2023) is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For landscape, this means recognising the intrinsic beauty of the countryside (paragraph 180 (b)) and balancing any 'harm' to the landscape resource with the benefits of the scheme in other respects. This balancing exercise is to be undertaken by the decision maker (in this case the LPA) and falls outside the remit of this report. The benefits of the scheme are to be weighed against the effects on the landscape character and visual amenity as set out in this report, as detailed in the Planning Statement accompanying this application. The policy framework is supported by the National Planning Policy Guidance where relevant.

2.4 Planning applications are required to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include the NPPF (the Framework).

Local Planning Policy

2.5 In order to properly assess the effects of the proposal in landscape terms, EDP has conducted a review of relevant planning policy and landscape designations to identify what 'value' the local authority places on the landscape and what value it has in planning terms. This review focuses on local plan policy since such policy is (a) more specific to the Site and (b) reflects the advice of regional and national advice regarding landscape issues.

2.6 The statutory development plans which are relevant to the Site comprise:

- *Cherwell Local Plan 2011–2031 Part 1* (adopted July 2015); and
- Saved Policies of the *Adopted Cherwell Local Plan* 1996.

2.7 CDC are currently undergoing consultation on the draft Cherwell Local Plan Review 2040, including supporting evidence base documents (relevant Landscape Character Assessments are discussed further in Section 3. While this is under preparation, Cherwell Local Plan 2011–2031 Part 1 and the saved policies of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996 remain part of the current development plan.

Cherwell Local Plan 1996 Saved Policies

2.8 The Local Plan Proposals Map shows no specific policies applying to the Site.

2.9 The following saved policies to be retained under the new 2011–2031 Local Plan are considered relevant in the context of this assessment:

- Saved policy C7: Landscape conservation, requires development to take into account the surrounding topography and landscape character so as not to detract from important views; and

- Saved Policy C28: Layout, design and external appearance of new development, which relates to the design of development (including siting, layout, size, scale, architectural style, building materials, means of enclosure and landscaping), and which should be sympathetic to the character of its landscape context.

Cherwell Local Plan 2011–2031: Part 1 (Adopted July 2015)

2.10 The over-arching policies contained within the Cherwell Local Plan 2011–2031 that are considered relevant in the context of this baseline appraisal are discussed below.

2.11 **Policy SLE 1**: Employment Development relates to new employment sites, setting out a number of criteria that relate to landscape matters, including that:

"*New employment proposals within rural areas on non-allocated sites will be supported if they meet the following criteria:*

- *They will be outside of the Green Belt, unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated;*

- *Sufficient justification is provided to demonstrate why the development should be located in the rural area on a non-allocated site;*

- *They will be designed to very high standards using sustainable construction, and be of an appropriate scale and respect the character of villages and the surroundings;*

- *They will be small scale unless it can be demonstrated that there will be no significant adverse impacts on the character of a village or surrounding environment;*

- *The proposal and any associated employment activities can be carried out without undue detriment to residential amenity, the highway network, village character and its*

setting, the appearance and character of the landscape and the environment generally including on any designated buildings or features (or on any non-designated buildings or features of local importance); and

- *The proposal will not give rise to excessive or inappropriate traffic and will wherever possible contribute to the general aim of reducing the need to travel by private car."*

2.12 **Policy ESD 10** Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment relates to the retention, enhancement, and extension of existing features of nature conservation, and creation of new ecological resources, where possible to bring a net gain in biodiversity. The protection of existing trees and new tree planting is encouraged to increase the number of trees in the district.

2.13 **Policy ESD 13** Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement states:

"Opportunities will be sought to secure the enhancement of the character and appearance of the landscape, particularly in urban fringe locations, through the restoration, management or enhancement of existing landscapes, features or habitats and where appropriate the creation of new ones, including the planting of woodlands, trees and hedgerows.

Development will be expected to respect and enhance local landscape character, securing appropriate mitigation where damage to local landscape character cannot be avoided. Proposals will not be permitted if they would:

- *Cause undue visual intrusion into the open countryside;*
- *Cause undue harm to important natural landscape features and topography;*
- *Be inconsistent with local character;*
- *Impact on areas judged to have a high level of tranquillity;*
- *Harm the setting of settlements, buildings, structures or other landmark features; or*
- *Harm the historic value of the landscape.*

Development proposals should have regard to the information and advice contained in the Council's Countryside Design Summary Supplementary Planning Guidance, and the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study and be accompanied by a landscape assessment where appropriate."

2.14 **Policy ESD 15** The Character of the Built and Historic Environment requires that new development should complement and enhance that character of its context through sensitive siting, layout and high-quality design. It states that*:*

"New development proposals should:

- *Be designed to deliver high quality safe, attractive, durable and healthy places to live and work in. Development of all scales should be designed to improve the quality and appearance of an area and the way it functions;*

- *Deliver buildings, places and spaces that can adapt to changing social, technological, economic and environmental conditions;*

- *Support the efficient use of land and infrastructure, through appropriate land uses, mix and density/development intensity; and*

- *Contribute positively to an area's character and identity by creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness and respecting local topography and landscape features, including skylines, valley floors, significant trees, historic boundaries, landmarks, features or views, in particular within designated landscapes, within the Cherwell Valley and within conservation areas and their setting."*

2.15 **Policy ESD 17** Green Infrastructure relates to pursuing opportunities to improve the green infrastructure network. It states that:

"*The district's green infrastructure network will be maintained and enhanced through the following measures*:

Ensuring that green infrastructure network considerations are integral to the planning of new development. Proposals should maximise the opportunity to maintain and extend green infrastructure links to form a multi-functional network of open space, providing opportunities for walking and cycling, and connecting the towns to the urban fringe and the wider countryside beyond."

Other Documents of Relevance to Landscape Matters

2.16 The following evidence base documents have been considered as part of this appraisal.

Supplementary Planning Documents

2.17 Although this is now considered very dated, the *Countryside Design Summary* (June 1998) is Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) adopted in 1998. This document was informed by the older *Cherwell District Landscape Assessment* by Cobham Resource Consultants (November 1995), which describes the landscape character of the District. Development proposals should reference the information and advice contained in this SPG, as well as the more recent landscape assessment within the *Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study*. The intention of the SPG document is that it will "*encourage creative and imaginative*

approaches to new development, which reflects the existing distinctive character of the villages and countryside of Cherwell District" rather than being prescriptive.

Landscape Designations

2.18 EDP has considered landscape-related designations, such as National Parks, National Landscapes and TPOs. In addition, it has also considered relevant heritage matters such as: registered parks and gardens, SM or registered battlefields, LB and CA, but only insofar as they may influence landscape character or result in greater sensitivity to change in terms of visual amenity.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks

2.19 No part of the Site lies within, or close to, a national or regionally designated landscape. There are no designated landscapes within the wider study area.

Heritage Matters

2.20 The RPG of Aynho Park is located 3km to the north-west of the Site. Owing to surrounding topography and vegetation there is no intervisibility between the Site and the park.

2.21 There are no CA within the Site or directly adjacent. However, the Ardley Village conservation Area is located approximately 1.5km South-west of the Site. Largely due to mature tree cover aligning the M40, there is no perception of the Site itself in views from the Ardley Village conservation Area.

2.22 The scheduled monument of the medieval village of Tusmore (site of) is located approximately 1.5km to the north of the Site.

2.23 There are no LB within the Site. LB in the area are:

- Barn (Grade II) at a distance of approximately 100m East of the Site;
- Church of St Peter (Grade II*) and two headstones within the churchyard (Grade II) at distance of approximately 900m south-east of the Site; and
- Stable range and cottage at Swift's house (Grade II) at a distance of approximately 900m to the south of the Site.

2.24 It is important to note that the assessment of potential visual effects of the Proposed Development on the settings of LB are considered as part of this LVIA Baseline only to the extent that they contribute to the overall local landscape and visual character and does not relate to any potential effect upon the setting or character of the heritage asset. As such, the visual amenity of the above LB will be considered as part of the baseline visual assessment in **Section 4**, but effects upon them are not considered within this assessment.

Ecology Matters

2.25 A separate Ecology Assessment undertaken by EDP considers the ecological assets within the study area. While these are not landscape designations *per se*, as for the above referenced heritage assets, they do, on occasion, serve to influence the character of the landscape and can inform landscape value. The locations of ecology assets readily sourced from published data are illustrated on **Figure 9.2**.

2.26 An Extended Phase 1 Habitat survey undertaken by EDP confirmed that the vast majority of the Site comprises large, intensive arable fields sown with commercial cereal crops, and as such is of negligible inherent ecological value, offering minimal opportunities for protected species except for a small number of farmland birds, bats, brown hare and invertebrate species. Arable fields within the Site are enclosed by a native hedgerow network with a number of associated mature trees. These hedgerows are considered to be of local value and are also capable of supporting protected species.

2.27 The ecology asset closest to the Site is Ardley Cutting and Quarry Sites of Special Scientific Interest approximately 2km south and south-west of the Site.

Other Relevant Considerations

Arboricultural Matters

2.28 There are no known TPO trees within or adjacent the site.

2.29 As illustrated on **Figure 9.2**, Stoke Bushes Ancient Woodland is situated 100m east of the site; and

2.30 Stoke Wood is an area of Ancient woodland which is situated approximately 200m to the south of the site, this is physically separated from the site by Cherwell Valley services and road infrastructure.

Public Rights of Way

2.31 The locations of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) within the ZTV of the Proposed Development, discussed further in **Section 4**, have been taken from Ordnance Survey Explorer Mapping (at a scale of 1:25,000) and PRoW route codes from the online Oxfordshire Countryside Access Map.

2.32 There are no PRoW within the Site. Stoke Lyne PRoW (367/24/10) passes adjacent to the Sites Northern boundary. Potential views of the Site from the above route and others within the wider countryside will be considered as part of the baseline visual assessment in **Section 4**.

Summary: Key Points Arising from the Planning Policy and Designation Review

2.33 A review of the Site's planning context has found that:

- The Site does not lie within, or contain, any nationally or locally designated landscapes;
- There are few LB in close proximity to the Site and few, if any, with clear intervisibility with the Site;
- There was not found to be any material visual relationship between the Site and any conservation area;
- There are numerous blocks of ancient woodland throughout the study area, these are all separated from the Site by road infrastructure or existing development.
- There are no PRoW within the Site. There is one PRoW directly to the north of the Site and while there are a number of PRoW within the local area they were found to afford limited views of the Site. A visual appraisal of the Site is considered in more detail at **Section 4**; and
- One Scheduled Monument is located within 1km of the Site, namely the Medieval Village of Tusmore (Site of).

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Section 3
Baseline Landscape Resources

Introduction

3.1 This section considers baseline landscape character matters and identifies other landscape resource receptors that are relevant to the assessment. Visual amenity is considered in **Section 4** while the potential landscape and visual effects of the development of the Site are considered in **Section 6**.

3.2 Baseline conditions in respect of the published landscape character assessments are summarised below, followed by a summary of EDP's own assessment of the character of the Site and local context.

Review of Published Landscape Character Assessments

National Landscape Character

3.3 The landscape of England has been subject to a nationwide Landscape Character Assessment, *The Character of England: Landscape, Wildlife and Natural Features* (Natural England). The Site falls within National Character Area (NCA) Profile 107 Cotswolds.

3.4 While the descriptions of NCA 107 are useful in that it provides a context for the Site, and a broad framework for more detailed landscape character assessments, it is too generic to provide specific site level characterisation. For the scale of the development proposed, it is considered that the description of landscape character undertaken at the sub-regional level is more relevant in establishing the landscape resource baseline.

Local Landscape Character

3.5 Of more relevance, is the landscape character outlined within local publications, namely the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (2004).

Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study

3.6 The Site lies within 'Wooded Estatelands' Landscape Character Type (LCT) and is described within the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study as *"a wooded estate landscape characterised by arable farming and small villages with a strong vernacular character."*

3.7 Key characteristics of the Wooded Estatelands LCT relevant to the Site and its context include:

- *"Rolling topography with localised steep slopes;*
- *Large blocks of ancient woodland and mixed plantations of variable sizes;*

- *Large parklands and mansion houses;*
- *A regularly shaped field pattern dominated by arable fields; and*
- *Small villages with strong vernacular character."*

3.8 The 'Forces for Change' for this LCT highlights "some *large scale business parks using inappropriate building materials are visually intrusive*."

3.9 The landscape strategy for the LCT is to *"safeguard and enhance the characteristic landscape of parklands, estates, woodlands, hedgerows and unspoilt villages".*

3.10 While the Site sits wholly within the Wooded estatelands LCT, it is bordered to the north-west by the Farmland Plateau LCT. This landscape character is characterised by '*a distinctive elevated and exposed character, broad skies and long distance views'* and a landscape dominated by large scale arable fields, "*with some medium sized plantations partially obscuring the otherwise open views".*

3.11 The strategy for the Plateau Farmland LCT is to *"Conserve the open and remote character of the landscape, and maintain the large-scale field pattern",* with key recommendations including to *"Safeguard and enhance the open, sparsely settled character of the landscape whilst maintaining and strengthening its pattern of hedgerows, stone walls, small woodlands and tree belts",* and to *"Ensure that all priority habitats are in favourable condition and management".*

South Northamptonshire Landscape Character Assessment

3.12 Further north, beyond 2km from the Site, the South Northamptonshire Landscape Character Assessment (2003) "provides a detailed review of Northamptonshire's current landscape character". It defines the northermost areas of the Study Area as falling within the Limestone Plateau Landscape Type and, more specifically, within Landsacpe Character Area 10a: Croughton, Aynho and Farthinghoe Plateau. The description of landscape character for this LCA states that:

"Typical of the landscape type, woodland cover is limited to mainly broadleaved copses of varying size. These are frequently found on the edges of the area, with the exception of Coleready Plantation, north of Charlton, which is located in a more central position on the upper slopes of the gently undulating plateau. Despite scattered woodland blocks and hedgerow trees of mainly mature oak and ash, the elevated plateau landscape allows wide, panoramic views over the surrounding area. The landscape is sparsely settled, with the villages of Farthinghoe and Aynho located on the edges of the plateau, adjacent to the Undulating Hills and Valleys landscape type. Central to both compact settlements are relatively busy roads passing over the plateau and descending the surrounding hills and valleys. The A43(T) also passes through the area to the southeast. Beyond the main roads, access across the plateau is limited to direct, minor roads connecting villages and isolated farms and dwellings, often aligned in an east/west direction."

The Cherwell Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (CLSA) (2022)

3.13 A recent assessment of landscape character was undertaken by EDP in September 2022 as part of the evidence base for the Council's Local Plan Review.

3.14 The Cherwell Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (CLSA) (2022), identified the site within 'LS M40 J10_1: Land to the North-Eat of Baynard's Green, stating that:

"This assessment unit is located to the north east of Baynard's Green and comprises 65.65 hectares of arable land. It is in the Wooded Estatelands LCT and characterised by six medium scale arable fields enclosed by hedgerows with occasional hedgerow trees. The assessment unit is bound to the north by a wooded belt forming part of the southern edge of the Tusmore Park estate. Land to the east and south is arable land. The unit is bound to the west by the A43 corridor. A track accessible to pedestrians (PRoW 367/24/10) runs near to the northern unit boundary. (note PRoW not shown on OS base map)."

3.15 LS M40 J10_1 (the Site) is identified as having *"a moderate-high sensitivity to logistics development as most of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are sensitive to the scale and massing of this type of development".* The CLSA does not preclude commercial development in this location, with the definition of a moderate-high sensitivity stating that *"The key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are sensitive to change. There may be very limited situations/locations where the development scenario can be accommodated".*

3.16 Notably, the key sensitivities of this land parcel, as defined by the CLSA, include:

- *"The largely rural character of the area, particularly to the east of the unit.*
- *Proximity of the rural settlement of Stoke Lyne to the east.*
- *Proximity to the Tusmore Park estate (18th Century landscape) to the north."*

3.17 The CLSA goes on to provide guidance and recommendations for new development, stating that any new development should:

- *"Retain the pattern of hedgerows and hedgerow trees forming enclosure to fields.*
- *Recognise proximity of Tusmore Park estate to the north and more rural character of landscape to the east.*
- *Plan for successful integration of development in the landscape through sensitive design and siting, including use of appropriate materials and landscape mitigation to enhance sense of place.*
- *Include woodland planting in keeping with landscape character to form part of a mitigation strategy for any proposed development."*

EDP Landscape Character Assessment

3.18 EDP conducted an assessment of the Site's characteristics during August 2021, in dry clear weather conditions. The individual elements of the Site were noted, as were the differences in the composition and the character of the Site's physical components to the published assessment, and their value and ability to accommodate change (for definitions see **Annex EDP 2**).

3.19 The aerial photograph provided at **Figure 9.4** illustrates the character and features of the landscape across the Site and near context. The photographs taken from the illustrative viewpoint locations also illustrate the character of the landscape across the Site area and surrounding area (**Figure 9.6: Photoviewpoints EDP 1** to **11**).

3.20 Recognising that 'landscape' is multi-dimensional, embracing sensory perception, time depth and physical attributes, this LVB reviews landscape character in terms of the following aspects or dimensions:

- The physical landscape;
- Visual and sensory character;
- Landscape fabric and biodiversity; and
- Cultural and historic aspects.

Physical Landscape

3.21 The landscape within the context of the Site includes a mix of rural features with major vehicular corridors to the north-west and south-west. As shown on **Figure 9.4**, the Site itself is generally flat with levels falling gently to the east and is typical of the surrounding area of the Wooded Estatelands LCT. Within the local context, the Site sits on a broad plateau, with land to the south-east being gently undulating and land to the north generally being level. Far reaching views are limited owing to surrounding mature vegetation and blocks of woodland. These very minor localised changes in level, combined with mature tree cover, largely determines visual and perceptual characteristics across the Site. From the wider context, as illustrated in **Photoviewpoints EDP 1** to **11**, there is very little, intervisibility between the Site and the wider context.

3.22 The Site is located in close proximity to major vehicular routes namely the M40 to the south-west and A43 to the west. The A43 runs parallel to the Sites north-western boundary which is screened from views by dense boundary vegetation. The B4100 separates the Site's two land parcels, which then gently rises to the south enabling views looking north form a slightly elevated position.

Visual and Perceptual

3.23 The location of the Site, within a gently undulating landscape to the east and flat topography

to the north, results in limited visibility from the surrounding context, with most ground level views being filtered by intervening hedgerows and other vegetation. Views back to the Site from publicly accessible locations are generally limited by mature field boundary vegetation within the Site's local context, characteristic of the surrounding Landscape Character Area. With the more open views being experienced from sections of the B4100. The Site's general character is illustrated on **Figure 9.4**.

3.24 Due to a combination of mature tree and woodland cover, including the 'medium-sized plantations' as identified above, there was not found to be any intervisibility between land in the immediate vicinity of Junction 10 and Aynho RPG, which lies over 4km to the north. Similarly, also benefiting from visual screening afforded by mature tree and hedgerows aligning busy vehicular corridors, which curtail views within the gently undulating landscape, are a number of LB, with those present generally being focussed on land to the west of the Junction around Ardley and Fritwell.

3.25 Other than the M40, small nucleated settlements are the predominant built character of the local area. These small villages have largely retained their connection with the surrounding landscape and certainly their 'small village' character with limited 20 and 21 Century development. Whilst the setting of the CA at Ardley and Fritwell should be considered, so too should the village setting of Stoke Lyne, which although not designated, has its own village setting and identity that retains an agricultural character that should be respected.

3.26 The character of the site is influenced by the road infrastructure of the A43, B4100 as well as the M40 corridor further afield which all exert an audible influence on local tranquillity. In views from the west however, major road infrastructure is generally well screened by mature vegetation, including views from the Ardley Conservation Area.

3.27 As discussed further in **Section 4**, there are the following public open views of the Site:

- The road bridge over the M40 allows open views across the Site and the wider landscape, although owing to the flat nature of local topography, mature landscape tree cover and field boundary hedgerows limit views to the wider landscape. Large motorway signage is a prominent feature in local views, as illustrated in **Image EDP 3.1**;

- Open views from land to the west of the M40 are possible due to the open nature of the largely rural context. However, mature tree cover in the middle distance and aligning the M40 serves to restrict longer views, as illustrated in **Image EDP 3.2**;

- Views from the south-east are limited by mature woodland cover surrounding Cherwell Valley Services; and

- Although undulating topography serves to limit some views, views from Stoke Lyne retain a rural character that should be respected. Views from the village are illustrated in **Image EDP 3.3**.

3.28 From a sensory perspective, the Site itself is relatively unremarkable within the landscape. It does not form a prominent, or important, part of the appreciation of the wider landscape and is perceived as agricultural field parcels of limited interest, being sited between the village of Stoke Lyne and major road corridors, with a wider agricultural and rural context to the east.

Site Photography

Image EDP 3.1: View looking south-east towards Junction 10 from a road bridge over the motorway, illustrating the largely flat nature of local topography, with mature landscape tree cover and field boundary hedgerows limiting views to the wider landscape and large motorway signage being prominent.

Image EDP 3.2: View looking east towards the M40 from open agricultural land to the west.

Image EDP 3.3: Open views look north-east from the edge of Stoke Lyne village.

Landscape Fabric and Biodiversity

3.29 The landscape fabric of the Site comprises a series of agricultural fields of varying sizes. The key characteristics of the Site are consistent with the current agricultural land use prevalent in the wider area. Mature trees are found along some of the field boundaries and are generally in good condition. Internally the fields are separated with hedgerows.

3.30 There is a notable difference in woodland cover between the east and west of the A43, in line with the published character assessment, which broadly identifies the A43 as the edge of the 'Wooded Estatelands' Character Area and the start of the 'Farmland Plateau' LCA. That being said, the Farmland plateau area, although not as enclosed by woodland belts, does still benefit from layers of field boundary trees and hedgerows within what is a gently undulating landscape.

3.31 The Ecological appraisal prepared by EDP provides additional information of the land use, hedgerows and other plant species and habitats found on Site and their ecological value. However, for the most part, this is not a piece of agricultural land with a particularly high ecological value. In common with much of intensively managed lowland England, the Site has probably experienced considerable decline in biodiversity in recent decades. So far as we know, it is not being managed under the auspices of any agri-environment scheme, so dramatic improvements in ecological value in the future seem highly unlikely. However, there are areas of semi-improved grassland and a number of species rich hedgerows throughout the Site.

Cultural and Historic Aspects

3.32 The locations of heritage assets readily sourced from published data are illustrated on **Figure 9.2** and briefly described in **Section 2**.

3.33 With regard to landscape character, there are no heritage assets within the Site. The closest assets to the Site are largely physically and visually separated from the Site by intervening vegetation and road infrastructure.

3.34 While there are a number of heritage assets present within the local context, in relation to landscape matters, there is no reason to believe that heritage issues should influence the character of the landscape and therefore constrain development of the Site.

Value of the Landscape Receptors

3.35 The following paragraphs describe the value of the landscape receptors as assessed by EDP and within published documents. Value and susceptibility to change are considered independently in the assessment of overall 'sensitivity' of landscape receptors, in accordance with best practice guidance.

3.36 Published landscape character assessments provide some contextual understanding of the defining characteristics of the wider landscape and, in some respects, the Site itself. As set out above, the Site and its surrounding context correlates with many of the key rural characteristics of the Wooded Estatelands LCT. Junction 10 of the M40 is located at the boundary of two LCTs and, as such, the key characteristics of the area do not wholly represent one or the other of the LCTs. Although the descriptions provided within the published landscape character assessments are broadly applicable to Junction 10 and its context, those of relevance include: *"Level or gently rolling open ridges"*; *"Sparsely settled landscape with a few nucleated settlements"*; and *"Long, straight roads running along the ridge summits"*.

3.37 The descriptions of the Wooded Estatelands LCT include a number of forces for change, including that *"some large scale business parks using inappropriate building materials are visually intrusive*." However, it is noteworthy that this assessment is now almost 20 years old and that the local context, particularly around the junction itself, is evoloving. Therefore, on balance, the value and susceptibility of the local landscape character is considered to be **medium**, leading to an overall medium sensitivity.

3.38 The Site and its context is not considered to be particularly representative of the wider Plateau Farmland LCT, however, the forces for change set out within LCT do acknowledge that "The exposed character of the plateau is particularly sensitive to visually intrusive development, large buildings and communication masts". As such, the susceptibility to the change proposed would be high to this non-host landscape type. In combination with a medium value, the overall sensitivity to the proposed development would be **medium**.

3.39 The landscape elements with the potential to be adversely impacted by the development of the Site would include hedgerow boundaries and mature trees which define the existing agricultural field parcels. These landscape elements have been shown to be characteristic of published character assessments and are present within the Site or local context. However, the Site is adversely affected, in a sensory manner, by its proximity to the surrounding road infrastructure of the M40, A43 and the B4100, which is partially visible in short-distance views. Furthermore, the Site does not lie within, or contain, any nationally or locally designated landscapes and it does not represent, in a perceptual or physical sense, a landscape of any great importance or distinct character. Furthermore, there is no evidence to suggest that the local community place special weight on the Site, meaning

overall the Site is considered to be of no more than local landscape value. However, it is acknowledged that the susceptibility to change of land to the east of the site would be high, with a lower susceptibility to change for land in close proximity to the motorway junction. Therefore, on balance, the value and susceptibility of the site and the local context is considered to be medium, leading to an overall **medium** sensitivity.

Interim Conclusions: Landscape Character

3.40 A number of landscape character assessments provide a helpful contextual understanding of the defining characteristics of the wider landscape. As illustrated on **Figure 9.3**, the Site has been identified within the Wooded Estatelands LCT.

3.41 In terms of landscape features, the Site comprises relatively simple parcels of agricultural land. The pattern of medium-scale arable fields is defined by maintained hedgerows.

3.42 While there are some mature landscape features on the Site boundaries and within the surrounding context, busy vehicular corridors exert an urbanising influence on the character of the Site.

3.43 The masterplan proposals would need to incorporate the appropriate guidance of the published landscape assessments, retaining and enhancing the existing characteristic elements whilst incorporating new tree planting, to minimise effects on the landscape and integrate the development successfully into the wider rural landscape context of the Wooded Estatelands LCT.

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Section 4
Baseline Visual Resources

4.1 This section identifies those visual receptors that may be able to obtain views to the Site, their distribution, character and value. It also identifies representative viewpoints that form the basis of assessment of views to the Site.

4.2 EDP has conducted the assessment of the views available to and from the Site by walking and driving (as appropriate) local roads and rights of way. Before doing so, a broad area of search was defined using a GIS based computer programme that predicts the ZTV, as detailed below.

Visibility to the Site

4.3 Utilising Environmental Agency Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) data at 2m resolution within a GIS, and to aid the selection of representative viewpoints, EDP prepared a broad ZTV as a step in defining the broader study area. The ZTV (illustrated on **Figure 9.5**) was then visited by walking and driving (as appropriate) local roads, rights of way and other publicly accessible viewpoints. Through this exercise the main visual receptors predicted to have actual visibility to the Site were identified, and the Zone of Primary Visibility was established, as illustrated on **Figure 9.5**.

Zone of Primary Visibility

4.4 The ZPV, identified on **Figure 9.5**, is where the proposed development would be visible to the casual observer on foot, cycling, driving or travelling by train where the views would normally be close-ranging and open; the proposal would be an obvious element of the view. Beyond this area, there is a zone of visibility that is less open, being either partly-screened or filtered. Views from within this wider zone may include the proposal, it may not be immediately noticeable, but once recognised any new development may be a perceptible addition to the view. The extent of the proposal within such views would vary and, in some cases, it would be almost indistinguishable as a consequence of both increasing distance and intervening visual screening.

4.5 The visual appraisal identified that the gently undulating landform to the east of the study area means that landform, settlement, structures and vegetation provide effective screening for the Site. Land to the north is more open, although the layering effect of field boundary hedgerows, and mature trees and hedgerows aligning vehicular corridors, provide some element of screening to built form around major highway junctions. The visual appraisal, illustrated at **Figure 9.5**, shows the ZPV for the Site and its main determinants. It shows that visual containment is provided by:

- A PRoW and private track extend along the northern boundary with boundary vegetation limiting views to the immediate context. public views are glimpsed through the boundary hedgerow and through a field gate to the north-eastern corner;

- A minor road runs along the Site's eastern boundary allowing glimpsed views into the Site through occasional field gates. Looking east, views towards Stoke Lyne are screened by surrounding vegetation and trees;

- The B4100 forms the Site's southern and western boundary and, as ground level rise to the south of the site, a slightly elevated view can be obtained for receptors travelling north;

- The A43 travels along the Sites north-western boundary, where dense boundary vegetation means that no views into or across the Site are possible; and

- To the west the Site is contained by a field boundary and agricultural fields. Mature woodlands screen views from Cherwell Motorway Services and the M40 beyond.

Representative Viewpoints

4.6 Within the actual ZPV, there are clearly many individual points at which views towards the Site may be gained, depending on many factors including weather conditions and the time of year. EDP has selected a number of viewpoints which are considered representative of views experienced by the various receptor groups described above. It is important to appreciate that these viewpoints are not representative of the general nature of views in the area taken as a whole. They are, for a start, taken only from locations where the Site and potential built form within it, could be seen, not where it cannot (which is a much more frequent experience). Their selection follows from the adoption of the principle that the assessment needs to test the 'worst case' and so EDP has selected only photoviewpoints from the small area within the surroundings towards the Site, where the Site may or is likely to be visible and where development upon it could accordingly affect the view seen.

4.7 In selecting these viewpoints, EDP has sought to include:

- A range of viewpoints from all points of the compass, north, south, east and west;

- A range of viewpoints from distances at close quarters at the Site boundary to longer distance views from the wider study area;

- Viewpoints from main road corridors;

- Viewpoints from the local PRoW network; and

- A number of viewpoints close to people's homes which may be considered representative of the private views which might be gained.

4.8 Based on fieldwork observations, and the findings of the data trawl, a number of representative viewpoints, or Photoviewpoints to be assessed, have been selected, the locations of which are shown on **Figure 9.5**, while the views themselves are shown on **Figure 9.6: Photoviewpoints EDP 1** to **18**.

4.9 Consultation with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) was undertaken as part of this LVA. During this process, the LPA appointed a sub-consultant (LUC) to review the application material. EDP presented a total of 11 photoviewpoints to LUC to inform the assessment of effects. With regards to Photoviewpoint locations, the following was requested:

- **Photoviewpoint EDP 1** to be located further south-west along the footpath;
- **Photoviewpoint EDP 11** to be located further east along the footpath;
- The addition of **Photoviewpoints EDP 12**, **13** and **14** in order to align the scope of the assessment with the neighbouring development parcel (key to the consideration of cumulative effects); and
- The addition of **Photoviewpoint EDP 15** to consider views from the north in the vicinity of Tusmore Park.

4.10 LUC confirmed acceptance to the scope of EDP's assessment by email on 22 February 2024.

4.11 For completeness, EDP presented three additional Photoviewpoints, to ensure that receptors in the wider study area are fully considered, including from those locations where views may be heavily filtered. EDP consider that the proposed scope of the Landscape and Visual Baseline is suitable in enabling the identification of significant effects of a proposed development without the need for additional viewpoint locations where limited intervisibility, if at all, is predicted.

4.12 Details of each view, and the reason for its selection as a 'representative viewpoint', are given in **Table EDP 4.1**

Table EDP 4.1: Selection of Representative Photoviewpoints (PVP).

No.	Viewpoint Location	Grid Ref	Distance and Direction from Site	Reason for Selection
PVP 1	View from PRoW 367/15/20 looking south	455244, 230547	1km north of the Site boundary	Represents views experiences by PRoW users (high sensitivity)
PVP 2	View from PRoW 367/19/10 looking south-west	456441, 229477	500m northeast of the Site boundary	Represents views experiences by PRoW users (high sensitivity)
PVP 3	View from a minor road adjacent to the Site boundary looking west	456271, 229192	On the eastern Site boundary	Representative of views for vehicle users and pedestrians on a minor road (medium sensitivity)

No.	Viewpoint Location	Grid Ref	Distance and Direction from Site	Reason for Selection
PVP 4	View from PRoW 367/26/10 to the east of the Site	456475, 229109	300m to the east of the site boundary.	Representative of views for vehicle users and pedestrians on a minor road (medium sensitivity) and PRoW users (high sensitivity)
PVP 5	View from a B-road (The Green) to the east of the Site	456533, 228302	750m to the south-east of the site boundary	Representative of views for vehicle users on a minor road (medium sensitivity)
PVP 6	View from a minor road and its junction with the B4100	455850, 228136	300m to the south of the site boundary	Representative of views for vehicle users on a minor road (medium sensitivity)
PVP 7	View from PRoW 367/21/10, looking north-east	454832, 228351	400m to the south-west of the site boundary	Represents views experiences by PRoW users (high sensitivity)
PVP 8	View from PRoW 109/7/10 looking north-east	454246, 227942	1.2km to the south-west of the site boundary	Represents views experiences by PRoW users (high sensitivity)
PVP 9	View from minor road (Fritwell Road) looking east	253595, 228247	1.7km to the west of the site boundary	Representative of views for vehicle users on a minor road (medium sensitivity)
PVP 10	View from PRoW 109/2/40 looking south-east	454177, 229546	800m to the west of the site boundary	Represents views experiences by PRoW users (high sensitivity)
PVP 11	View from PRoW 367/13/10 looking north-east	454208, 229565	775m to the west of the Site boundary.	Represents views experiences by PRoW users (high sensitivity)
PVP 12	View from PRoW 367/24/10 looking south	455585, 229405	On the northern Site boundary	Represents views experiences by PRoW users (high sensitivity)
PVP 13	View from PRoW 109/5/10 looking east	454315, 228872	700m to the west of the Site boundary.	Represents views experiences by PRoW users (high sensitivity)
PVP 14	View from PRoW 219/11/10 looking east	453071, 229348	1.9km to the west of the Site boundary.	Represents views experiences by PRoW users (high sensitivity)
PVP 15	View from a minor road, close to Tower Farm, looking south-east	453931, 230952	1.8km north-west of the Site boundary	Representative of views for vehicle users on a minor road (medium sensitivity)
PVP 16	View from a minor road to the north of the site, looking south	454559, 230834	1.35km north of the Site boundary	Representative of views for vehicle users on a minor road (medium sensitivity)

No.	Viewpoint Location	Grid Ref	Distance and Direction from Site	Reason for Selection
PVP 17	View from PRoW 367/8/10 looking north-west	457183, 227854	1.6km to the south-east of the Site boundary.	Represents views experiences by PRoW users (high sensitivity)
PVP 18	View from PRoW 367/14/10 looking south	455988, 230222	900m north of the Site boundary	Represents views experiences by PRoW users (high sensitivity)

4.13 The following paragraphs summarise the baseline visual context.

PRoW

4.14 Aside from PRoW immediately adjacent to the northern boundary (**Photoviewpoint EDP 12**), there are few PRoW within the Study Area that afford views of the Site. Views from PRoW are limited to a few PRoW within close proximity, or immediately adjacent to the Site, largely where breaks in tree cover occur.

4.15 Where routes access open agricultural land views are, as is to be expected, more open as illustrated in **Photoviewpoint EDP 1**. From the PRoW the A43 is glimpsed through boundary vegetation, with vehicle movements exerting a strong audible influence on the rural nature of the view and adversely affecting tranquillity. Due to the well-treed context of the wider landscape however, views of the Site and any development within it are likely to be glimpsed, and in many cases barely perceptible.

4.16 From the north-east of the Site, as illustrated in **Photoviewpoint EDP 2**, views from PRoW are limited to the immediate agricultural context by the surrounding mature vegetation and tree canopies. Further north, **Photoviewpoint EDP 18** illustrates views experienced by PRoW users within the landscape in close proximity to Tusmore Park (though there are no views of the Site from Tusmore Park itself). From here, there are no views of the site due to the number of woodland blocks within the view, including the recent plantation immediately to the north of the site which will mature over time.

4.17 To the east is the village of Stoke Lyne where views from the country lanes are frequently contained to the immediate setting due to a combination of mature landscape features and gently undulating topography as shown on **Photoviewpoint EDP 4**. However, views from PRoW within open agricultural land are possible, albeit with some filtering of the view due to mature tree cover. Beyond Stoke Lyne, though there are some long views from PRoW, as illustrated at **Photoviewpoint EDP 17**, there is little appreciation of land to the north west of the village, including the site.

4.18 To the south-west of the Site, PRoW routes run west from Stoke Wood to the north of Cherwell Motorway Services. From here, as illustrated in **Photoviewpoint EDP 7**, views are heavily filtered to the immediate context, being screened by mature scrub and surrounding field boundaries. The PRoW runs in close proximity to Junction 10 of the M40 which exerts a strong audible influence which adversely affects tranquillity.

4.19 To the west of the Site, PRoWs run north to south providing connectivity to the village of Ardley. Within the boundary of the neighbouring application site, PRoW No. 109/5/10 (footpath) runs from Baynard's Green towards the M40 where a bridge crossing provides access to the west of the motorway (refer to **Photoviewpoint EDP 13**). PRoW routes continue south towards Ardley and north towards Fritwell, where **Photoviewpoint EDP 14** illustrates views looking east. However, in these views there is little appreciation of the landscape to the east of the motorway.

4.20 Surrounding the village of Ardley to the west of the Site there is a more extensive network of PRoW, which provide connectivity into the wider landscape. As illustrated on **Photoviewpoint EDP 8** views towards the Site are limited by surrounding mature vegetation associated with the major road infrastructure of the M40 junction.

4.21 From PRoW to the east of the motorway, owing to a slightly elevated vantage point and limited tree cover within the wider context, longer distance views are possible (illustrated in **Photoviewpoint EDP 11**). Views towards the Site however are filtered by mature vegetation and tree cover. The lack of field boundary cover towards the M40 to the south (illustrated in **Photoviewpoint EDP 10**) allows clear views of vehicular movements and road signage.

4.22 It is considered that due to the focus on the surrounding landscape and interest in the local area, users of local PRoW throughout the study area, although with some de-sensitisation where views are possible of existing built form and man-made features, are considered to be **high** sensitivity receptors.

Main Roads

4.23 There are two main vehicular routes that are located in close proximity to the site, namely the M40 and the A43. The M40 motorway corridor cuts through the landscape to the west of the Site, due to mature vegetation lining the motorway corridor any views possible towards the Site would be glimpsed and, generally, barely perceptible.

4.24 The A43 travels north to south along the Sites north-western boundary. From this dual carriageway, a mature hedgerow provides some visual screening into the site, with any built form within the site likely to be visible from this busy route.

4.25 The focus of the view for road users on this busy route is not necessarily directed at the Site or its context. Users of this route are likely to be travelling to a destination, work, shopping or entertainment centres, and not doing to take in the view, so their sensitivity is **low**.

Minor Roads

4.26 The B4100 travels from south to north-west between the Site's two land parcels. Owing to the gently undulating topography of the landscape, as illustrated on **Photoviewpoint EDP 6**, for receptors travelling north, there are medium distance views of the southern areas of the site.

4.27 A country lane passes adjacent to the eastern boundary, where glimpsed views can be obtained across a portion of the northern site, being partially filtered by the boundary hedgerow. Further glimpsed views are also achieved through a field gate adjacent to the PRoW along the northern boundary as illustrated on **Photoviewpoint EDP 3**. Here views are filtered by field boundaries in the middle distance with mature vegetation beyond. Elsewhere within the study area due to the rural nature of the landscape there is a small network of minor roads.

4.28 To the east is the village of Stoke Lyne views from the country lanes are frequently contained to the immediate setting due to a combination of mature landscape features and gently undulating topography as shown on **Photoviewpoints EDP 4** and **5**. However, where breaks in field boundary vegetation occur, and from a short section of road to the north of the village which is bound by post and rail fencing, some views looking west are possible.

4.29 Further west Fritwell Road provides connections between Ardley and Fritwell. The road is elevated with views across the rolling landscape to the north. Long distance views are limited and filtered by mature vegetation associated with the M40 motorway corridor as illustrated on **Photoviewpoint EDP 9**.

4.30 To the north-west of the site, **Photoviewpoints EDP 15** and **16** illustrate views experienced by road users on a minor route within a rural context, where longer distance views within a relatively flat landscape are possible.

4.31 Although it is considered that road users on these minor routes, including users of public transport, have very little focus on the surrounding landscape, a number of minor roads pass through more rural areas and, in these locations, road users of minor roads in rural areas are of **medium** sensitivity. For road users on busier routes, particularly where there is likely to be no appreciation of the rural context, there sensitivity would be **low**.

Residential Receptors

4.32 This assessment focusses on views from publicly accessible locations. Views from private residential properties, although likely to be of high to very high sensitivity to changes in the view, are not protected by national planning guidance or local planning policy. However, it is considered that good site masterplanning of development sites should consider the visual amenity of domestic dwellings in close proximity to proposals and this has been undertaken in this case.

4.33 Notwithstanding this careful site design and consideration of residential views, some groups of residential receptors remain likely to experience some views towards the Site from within the curtilages of their properties.

4.34 Due to the distribution and orientation of residential properties and intervening vegetation within the landscape immediately surrounding the Site, the number of private residential properties with potential views of the proposed development is limited. A residential property does lie adjacent to the Site's eastern boundary and although separated by a

boundary hedgerow would be afforded views across a portion of the Site from elevated storeys.

4.35 Residents within the wider Study Area are generally less susceptible to the proposed development due to their views being contained to the 'settlement setting' and immediate surrounding fields and vegetation. This is particularly the case for residents within Stoke Lyne, Ardley and Fritwell. From the north, there may also be some private views towards the Site being experienced by residents at Park Farm. The sensitivity of residential receptors is dependent, to some extent, on the room(s), and the activities of people in those rooms, from which the Site is visible. Residents with visibility from rooms normally occupied in waking hours will generally have a very high sensitivity with a lower sensitivity from bedrooms and rooms from which there may be no expected view, for example bathrooms. In some instances, the purpose of rooms with potential views towards the Site cannot be ascertained from public vantage points, and thus in those circumstances a cautionary approach is adopted where the receptor is accorded a high to very high sensitivity.

Site Context After Dark

4.36 A total of eight locations were visit between the hours of 18:00 and 20:00 on the 24 of November 2021 (refer to **Figure 9.7**), with photography being recorded in line with best practice guidance published by the Landscape Institute.

4.37 It was found that lighting sources immediately around the Site are limited due to its largely agricultural context. However, as shown within **Night View EDP 3**, **5** and **10** the main lighting sources are predominantly found within the wider landscape and are associated the A43 and M40 junction, including a petrol station and fast-food outlet. The B4100 is unlit, however it is heavily trafficked such that views are affected by vehicular traffic as shown in **Night View EDP 6.**

4.38 From the north the view is rural across agricultural fields yet is affected by vehicular movement along the A43. Beyond this lighting associated with the M40 junction and Viridor Ardley ERF are visible, which can be seen in **Night View EDP 1**. Looking east, as illustrated **Night View EDP 11**, lighting associated with small industrial units adjacent to the A43 are visible, these are partially screened by boundary vegetation which reduces light spill to the wider field parcels meaning that to the northeast views are generally unaffected by light pollution.

4.39 EDP agrees that the lighting proposals within the scheme should address the existing landscape setting after dark and acknowledge that there is currently limited permanent lighting within the Sites immediate context. Lighting sources associated with the M40 and A43 are defining features of the character within the landscape after dark along with the lit tower associated with Viridor Ardley ERF which provide a backdrop to views across the Site.

4.40 Receptors that would be likely to experience a change to character after dark in the Site's immediate context would largely be limited to those within the village of Stoke Lyne, and those travelling along the B4100. Overall, it is considered that the sensitivity of landscape

character after dark would be **medium** due to there being some elements of lighting infrastructure along vehicular highways that adversely affect tranquillity after dark.

Summary of the Visual Baseline

4.41 As a complement to the appreciation of the character and evolution of the landscape (**Section 3** of this report) EDP has assessed the nature and distribution of views within, from and towards the Site.

4.42 EDP's analysis focuses on the assessment of visual impacts of the development of the Site from the surrounding landscape, concentrating on the views *towards* the Site from surrounding public locations. Such analysis provides an understanding of the location and sensitivity of surrounding areas with views towards the Site and therefore forms the basis of an assessment of the significance of any visual impacts arising from the Site proposals.

4.43 It is already clear from EDP's field appraisal and a review of the visual context that:

- Views from close quarters are generally only available from very small sections of busy road corridors and from very short sections of the local PRoW network immediately surrounding the Site;

- From most roads and footpaths beyond the immediate context of the Site, views towards the Site are filtered by intervening vegetation within a gently undulating landscape;

- Views from residential properties are generally limited to a single property immediately adjacent to the Site's eastern boundary, although with some potential views also being obtained from properties within Stoke Lyne. Beyond this, any middle distance to distant views of the Site are gained across gently undulating agricultural landscape and tend to be heavily filtered or fragmented by intervening vegetation; and

- Much of the wider study lies outside the visual envelope from where no views of the entire Site are possible.

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Section 5
Masterplanning and Design Recommendations

Review of Published Landscape Guidelines/Recommendations

5.1 As set out above, the overall strategy for the Wooded Estatelands LCT is to *"Safeguard and enhance landscape character of ancient woodlands, parklands, species-rich hedgerow network and tree lined watercourses."*

5.2 Guidelines for this LCT which are considered relevant to the Proposed Development include (with EDP emphasis where opportunities exist within the site):

- *"Conserve and sympathetically maintain species-rich hedgerows, and, where appropriate,* ***replant gappy hedges using species such as hawthorn, blackthorn, wayfaring tree, dogwood and spindle****; and*

- *Minimise the visual impact of intrusive land uses such as quarries, landfill sites, airfields and larde scale development, such as new barns and industrial units, with the* ***judiciosus [sic] planting of tree and shrub species characteristic of the area****. This will help to screen the development and integrate it more successfully with its surrounding countryside; and*

- *Maintain the nucleated pattern of settlements and* ***promote the use of building materials and a scale of development that is appropriate to this landscape type****."*

The Design Response

5.3 The findings of EDP's early and ongoing field appraisals have been fed into the evolving proposals in order to ensure that the masterplan is 'landscape led'. Accordingly, any proposed development should incorporate designed and embedded mitigation. The recommendations include:

- Existing mature landscape framework comprising hedgerows and associated mature trees at the Site boundaries to be retained where possible;

- Creation of a landscaped buffer from Proposed Development zones to protect and enhance retained boundary features of landscape and ecological interest;

- Broad-leaved native tree planting, including heavy standard trees, is proposed to fragment views of any proposed development, particularly at the eastern and south-eastern boundaries which would have a strong influence on the character and setting of Stoke Lyne;

- A gentle 'ecotone' to be created at the vegetated Site boundary by the planting of scrub vegetation, offering breeding, foraging, sheltering and overwintering opportunities for wildlife;

- Landscaped bunds outside the development zone and additional tree planting, particularly at the eastern boundary, would aid visual screening of the proposed built form and enhance habitat heterogeneity across an otherwise gently undulating landscape;

- Additional native trees added to strengthen the eastern and northern boundaries to integrate the proposals into the wider landscape setting; and

- Proposed tree belts to include fastigiated species that would grow tall in time and break up visual massing of buildings.

5.4 In addition to the above, there are a number of general landscape design principles that would guide the implementation of a suitable landscape scheme for the Proposed Development:

- Provision of structural landscaping, native trees and shrubs that reflect the local context throughout the scheme to maintain a buffer to the wider setting. Particularly within the northern areas of the Site, existing landscape features would be reinforced with additional planting measures in order to maintain the 'green' setting to the wider rural setting;

- The proposals should complement the existing landscape features of the Site and character of adjacent uses and rural areas; and

- The landscape strategy should take into consideration the long-term vision for the Site, using tree planting to filter into the proposed Development from adjacent green corridors and to frame and buffer the proposed built form.

Construction Mitigation

5.5 The following mitigation measures should be proposed during the construction of the Proposed Development, to be secured through a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) or similarly agreed method. They include:

- To safeguard the existing vegetation to be retained around the perimeter of the Site, tree protection zones should be created and fenced-off to ensure that the development would not encroach onto the root protection areas. An approved Arboricultural Method Statement should be adopted, incorporating best practice guidance set out in British Standard 5837: 2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction, which would ensure retained trees and other vegetation are not adversely affected during the construction process;

- The use of visual screening, such as hoardings around sections of the Site boundary to protect more sensitive visual receptors in close proximity, including residential receptors that have the greatest potential to be affected by the project; and

- Existing residents that live in close proximity to the Site, and receptors on local PRoW, would be more sensitive to construction lighting. Mitigation measures for construction lighting are likely to include directional fittings and restricted hours of operation and would be outlined within a Lighting Strategy for the project (produced by others). As a minimum requirement, any proposed lighting should be in accordance with local authority standards and with consideration of Lighting in the Countryside: Towards Good Practice (DCLG and CC, 1997). During construction, lighting effects would be mitigated by implementing good practice measures across the Site. Measures to be implemented include:

    - Specified working hours, uses of lighting, locations of floodlights;

    - Lighting to be switched off unless specifically needed; and

    - Barriers to be erected to shield adjacent receptors where appropriate.

Designed, or Embedded, Mitigation

5.6 The masterplan for the Site has evolved over time, with inputs from the applicant's consultant team, including EDP. Consistent with the landscape-led approach, EDP's landscape team has provided continuing feedback from the early stages of this LVIA Baseline process. EDP's role was to recommend masterplan responses to avoid or minimise potential landscape and visual effects in light of the more detailed findings of our field assessments.

5.7 The avoidance of effects is always challenging when there is a material change to land use, such as in the conversion of a greenfield site to future commercial use. However, the landscape and visual sensitivities of the Site have influenced masterplanning through an iterative process. Thus, the Site incorporates a degree of integral (or embedded) mitigation designed to avoid or reduce potential landscape and visual effects. Primarily they include the retention of the existing landscape fabric around the boundaries of the Site, including key biodiversity assets, as informed by the findings and recommendations of the ecology assessment. Namely, these are the mature hedgerows and tree cover which contribute to the landscape character of the local context.

5.8 Embedded mitigation provides a form of preventative mitigation and as discussed above, is that which has been considered as an integral part of the overall design and locational strategy for the Site. It is not an 'add-on' measure to ameliorate significant environmental effects, but part of the positive and pro-active approach whereby mitigation has been assessed and considered at all stages of the project to prevent or reduce the occurrence of potentially significant environmental effects.

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Annex EDP 1
Methodology for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Introduction

A1.1 Provided within this section is the methodology for landscape and visual impact assessment as used by EDP for development proposals of this type.

Methodology

A1.2 The assessment methodology for assessing landscape and visual effects prepared by EDP is based on the following best practice guidance:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – Third Edition (LI/IEMA, 2013); and
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (Natural England 2004).

A1.3 Other reference documents used to understand the baseline position in landscape terms comprise published landscape character assessments appropriate to the Site's location and the nature of the proposed development.

A1.4 The nature of landscape and visual assessment requires both objective analysis and subjective professional judgement. Accordingly, the following assessment is based on the best practice guidance listed above, information and data analysis techniques. It uses quantifiable factors wherever possible and subjective professional judgement where necessary, and is based on clearly defined terms (see Glossary, **Annex EDP 2**).

Landscape Assessment

A1.5 Landscape effects derive from changes in the physical landscape fabric that may give rise to changes in its character and how this is experienced. These effects need to be considered in line with changes already occurring within the landscape and which help to define the character of it.

A1.6 Effects upon the wider landscape resource, i.e. the landscape surrounding the development, requires an assessment of visibility of the proposals from adjacent landscape character areas, but remains an assessment of landscape character and not visual amenity.

Visual Assessment

A1.7 The assessment of effects on visual amenity draws on the predicted effects of the development, the landscape and visual context, and the visibility and viewpoint analyses,

and considers the significance of the overall effects of the proposed development on the visual amenity of the main visual receptor types in the study area.

Identifying Landscape and Visual Receptors

A1.8 This assessment has sought to identify the key landscape and visual receptors that may be affected by the changes proposed.

A1.9 The assessment of effects on landscape as a resource in its own right draws on the description of the development, the landscape context and the visibility and viewpoint analysis to identify receptors, which, for the proposed development may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- The landscape fabric of the development site;
- The key landscape characteristics of the local context;
- The 'host' landscape character area that contains the proposed development;
- The 'non-host' landscape character areas surrounding the host character area and may be affected by the proposals (where relevant); and
- Landscape designations on a national, regional or local level (where relevant).

A1.10 The locations and types of visual receptors within the defined study areas are identified from Ordnance Survey maps and other published information (such as walking guides), from fieldwork observations and from local knowledge provided during the consultation process. Examples of visual receptors may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Settlements and private residences;
- Users of National Cycle Routes and National Trails;
- Users of local/regional cycle and walking routes;
- Those using local rights of way – walkers, horse riders, cyclists;
- Users of open spaces with public access;
- People using major (motorways, A and B) roads;
- People using minor roads; and
- People using railways.

Assessment of Landscape and Visual Effects

A1.11 The assessment of effects on the landscape resource includes consideration of the potential changes to those key elements and components that contribute towards recognised landscape character or the quality of designated landscape areas; these features are termed landscape receptors. The assessment of visual amenity requires the identification of potential visual receptors that may be affected by the development. As noted, following the identification of each of these various landscape and visual receptors, the effect of the development on each of them is assessed through consideration of a combination of:

- Their overall sensitivity to the proposed form of development, which includes the susceptibility of the receptor to the change proposed and the value attached to the receptor; and

- The overall magnitude of change that will occur – based on the size and scale of the change, its duration and reversibility.

Defining Receptor Sensitivity

A1.12 A number of factors influence professional judgement when assessing the degree to which a particular landscape or visual receptor can accommodate change arising from a particular development. Sensitivity is made up of judgements about the 'value' attached to the receptor, which is determined at baseline stage, and the 'susceptibility' of the receptor, which is determined at the assessment stage when the nature of the proposals, and therefore the susceptibility of the landscape and visual resource to change, is better understood.

A1.13 Susceptibility indicates *"the ability of a defined landscape or visual receptor to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue negative consequences"*[1]. Susceptibility of visual receptors is primarily a function of the expectations and occupation or activity of the receptor. A degree of professional judgement applies in arriving at the susceptibility for both landscape and visual receptors and this is clearly set out in the technical appendices to this assessment.

A1.14 A location may have different levels of sensitivity according to the types of visual receptors at that location. Any one receptor type may be accorded different levels of sensitivity at different locations.

A1.15 **Table EDP A1.1** provides an indication of the criteria by which the overall sensitivity of a landscape receptor is judged within this assessment, and considers both value and susceptibility independently.

[1] Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition Page 158

Table EDP A1.1: Landscape Receptor Sensitivity.

Category	Landscape Receptor Value Criteria	Landscape Susceptibility to Change Criteria
Very High	Nationally/internationally designated/valued countryside and landscape features; strong/distinctive landscape characteristics; absence of landscape detractors.	Strong/distinctive landscape elements/-aesthetic/perceptual aspects; absence of landscape detractors; landscape receptors in excellent condition. Landscapes with clear and widely recognised cultural value. Landscapes with a high level of tranquillity.
High	Locally designated/valued countryside (e.g. Areas of High Landscape Value, Regional Scenic Areas) and landscape features; many distinctive landscape characteristics; very few landscape detractors.	Many distinctive landscape elements/-aesthetic/perceptual aspects; very few landscape detractors; landscape receptors in good condition. The landscape has a low capacity for change as a result of potential changes to defining character.
Medium	Undesignated countryside and landscape features; some distinctive landscape characteristics; few landscape detractors.	Some distinctive landscape elements/-aesthetic/perceptual aspects; few landscape detractors; landscape receptors in fair condition. Landscape is able to accommodate some change as a result.
Low	Undesignated countryside and landscape features; few distinctive landscape characteristics; presence of landscape detractors.	Few distinctive landscape elements/-aesthetic/perceptual aspects; presence of landscape detractors; landscape receptors in poor condition. Landscape is able to accommodate large amounts of change without changing these characteristics fundamentally.
Very Low	Undesignated countryside and landscape features; absence of distinctive landscape characteristics; despoiled/-degraded by the presence of many landscape detractors.	Absence of distinctive landscape elements/-aesthetic/perceptual aspects; presence of many landscape detractors; landscape receptors in very poor condition. As such landscape is able to accommodate considerable change.

A1.16 For visual receptors, judgements of susceptibility and value are closely interlinked considerations. For example, the most valued views are those that people go and visit because of the available view, and it is at those viewpoints that their expectations will be highest and thus most susceptible to change. The overall sensitivity of visual receptors is rated in a two-step process that combines both susceptibility and value as indicated by the criteria in **Table EDP A1.2**.

Table EDP A1.2: Visual Receptor Sensitivity.

Category	Visual Receptor Criteria
Very High	Designed view (which may be to or from a recognised heritage asset or other important viewpoint), or where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience. Key promoted viewpoint, e.g. interpretative signs. References in literature and art and/or guidebooks tourist maps. Protected view recognised in planning policy designation. Examples may include views from residential properties, especially from rooms normally occupied in waking or daylight hours; national public rights of way, e.g. National Trails and nationally designated countryside/landscape features with public access which people might visit purely to experience the view; and visitors to heritage assets of national importance.
High	View of clear value but may not be formally recognised, e.g. framed view of high scenic value, or destination hill summits. It may also be inferred that the view is likely to have value, e.g. to local residents. Examples may include views from recreational receptors where there is some appreciation of the landscape, e.g. golf and fishing; local public rights of way, access land and National Trust land, also panoramic viewpoints marked on maps; road routes promoted in tourist guides for their scenic value.
Medium	View is not promoted or recorded in any published sources and may be typical of the views experienced from a given receptor. Examples may include people engaged in outdoor sport other than appreciation of the landscape, e.g. football and rugby or road users on minor routes passing through rural or scenic areas.
Low	View of clearly lesser value than similar views experienced from nearby visual receptors that may be more accessible. Examples may include road users on main road routes (motorways/A roads) and users of rail routes or people at their place of work (where the place of work may be in a sensitive location). Also views from commercial buildings where views of the surrounding landscape may have some limited importance.
Very Low	View affected by many landscape detractors and unlikely to be valued. Examples may include people at their place of work, indoor recreational or leisure facilities or other locations where views of the wider landscape have little or no importance.

A1.17 The tables above offer a template for assessing overall sensitivity of any landscape or visual receptor as determined by combining judgements of their susceptibility to the type of change or development proposed and the value attached to the landscape as set out at paragraph 5.39 of GLVIA 3rd Edition (2013). However, the narrative in this report may demonstrate that assessment of overall sensitivity can change on a case-by-case basis.

A1.18 For example, a high susceptibility to change and a low value may result in a medium overall sensitivity, unless it can be demonstrated that the receptor is unusually susceptible or is in some particular way more valuable. A degree of professional judgement applies in arriving at the overall sensitivity for both landscape and visual receptors.

Magnitude of Change

A1.19 The magnitude of any landscape or visual change is determined through a range of considerations particular to each receptor. The three attributes considered in defining the magnitude are:

- Scale of change;
- Geographical extent; and
- Duration and reversibility/proportion.

A1.20 Receptor locations from which views of the proposed development are not likely to occur will receive no change and therefore no effect. With reference to the ZTV and site survey, the magnitude of change is defined for receptor locations from where visibility of the proposed development is predicted to occur.

A1.21 **Table EDP A1.3** provides an indication of the criteria by which the size/scale of change at a landscape or visual receptor is judged within this assessment.

Table EDP A1.3: Landscape and Visual Receptor Magnitude of Change Criteria.

Category	Landscape Receptor Criteria	Visual Receptor Criteria
Very High	Total loss of or major alteration to key elements/features/characteristics of the baseline condition. Addition of elements which strongly conflict with the key characteristics of the existing landscape.	There would be a substantial change to the baseline, with the proposed development creating a new focus and having a defining influence on the view.
High	Notable loss or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the baseline condition. Addition of elements that are prominent and may conflict with the key characteristics of the existing landscape.	The proposed development will be clearly noticeable and the view would be fundamentally altered by its presence.
Medium	Partial loss or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the baseline condition. Addition of elements that may be evident but do not necessarily conflict with the key characteristics of the existing landscape.	The proposed development will form a new and recognisable element within the view which is likely to be recognised by the receptor.
Low	Minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the baseline landscape. Addition of elements that may not be uncharacteristic within the existing landscape.	The proposed development will form a minor constituent of the view being partially visible or at sufficient distance to be a small component.

Category	Landscape Receptor Criteria	Visual Receptor Criteria
Very Low	Barely discernible loss or alteration to key elements/features/characteristics of the baseline landscape. Addition of elements not uncharacteristic within the existing landscape.	The proposed development will form a barely noticeable component of the view, and the view whilst slightly altered would be similar to the baseline situation.

A1.22 **Table EDP A1.4** provides an indication of the criteria by which the geographical extent of the area affected is adjudged within this assessment.

Table EDP A1.4: Geographical Extent Criteria.

	Landscape Receptors	Visual Receptor Criteria
Largest ↕ **Smallest**	Large scale effects influencing several landscape types or character areas.	Direct views at close range with changes over a wide horizontal and vertical extent.
	Effects at the scale of the landscape type or character areas within which the proposal lies.	Direct or oblique views at close range with changes over a notable horizontal and/or vertical extent.
	Effects within the immediate landscape setting of the Site.	Direct or oblique views at medium range with a moderate horizontal and/or vertical extent of the view affected.
	Effects at the Site level (within the development site itself).	Oblique views at medium or long range with a small horizontal/vertical extent of the view affected.
	Effects only experienced on parts of the Site at a very localised level.	Long range views with a negligible part of the view affected.

A1.23 The third, and final, factor in determining the predicted magnitude of change is duration and reversibility. Duration and reversibility are separate but linked considerations. Duration is judged according to the defined terms set out below, whereas reversibility is a judgement about the prospects and practicality of the particular effect being reversed in, for example, a generation. The categories used in this assessment are set out below.

Duration:

- Long term (20 years+);
- Medium to long term (10 to 20 years);
- Medium term (5 to 10 years);
- Short term (1 year to 5 years); and
- Temporary (less than 12 months).

Reversibility:

- Permanent with unlikely restoration to original state, e.g. major road corridor, power station, urban extension etc.;
- Permanent with possible conversion to original state, e.g. agricultural buildings, retail units;
- Partially reversible to a different state, e.g. mineral workings;
- Reversible after decommissioning to a similar original state, e.g. wind energy development; and
- Quickly reversible, e.g. temporary structures.

Significance of Effect

A1.24 The purpose of the EIA process is to identify the significant environmental effects (both beneficial and adverse) of development proposals. Schedule 4 to the EIA Regulations specifies the information to be included in all environmental statements, which should include a description of:

"The likely significant effects of the development on the environment, which should cover the direct effects and any indirect, secondary, cumulative, short, medium and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects of the development."

A1.25 In order to consider the likely significance of any effect, the sensitivity of each receptor is combined with the predicted magnitude of change to determine the significance of effect, with reference also made to the geographical extent, duration and reversibility of the effect within the assessment. Having taken such a wide range of factors into account when assessing sensitivity and magnitude at each receptor, the significance of effect can be derived by combining the sensitivity and magnitude in accordance with the matrix in **Table EDP A1.5**.

A1.26 The parameters identified for the evaluation of effects follows recommendations for the assessment of visual effects, in guidance published by Scottish Natural Heritage[2], which states that:

"The…matrix of three classes on each axis producing 9 cells, only 3 of which are typically judged as significant, is in our view simplistic and unrefined and quite unsuitable as a tool for widespread use. In particular it implies a degree of certainty about a very restricted definition of significance that we do not believe is justified. Expanding a 3 x 3 (9 cells) matrix to 4 x 4 (16 cells) or even 5 x 5 (25 cells) is much more representative of the diversity of size and sensitivity found in visual impact assessment."

[2] Scottish Natural Heritage (2002) *Visual Assessment of Windfarms Best Practice,* Scottish Natural Heritage Commissioned Report F01AA303A

Table EDP A1.5: Level of Effects Matrix

Overall Sensitivity	Overall Magnitude of Change				
	Very High	**High**	**Medium**	**Low**	**Very Low**
Very High	**Substantial**	**Major**	**Major/-Moderate**	**Moderate**	Moderate/-Minor
High	**Major**	**Major/-Moderate**	**Moderate**	Moderate/-Minor	Minor
Medium	**Major/-Moderate**	**Moderate**	Moderate/-Minor	Minor	Minor/-Negligible
Low	**Moderate**	Moderate/-Minor	Minor	Minor/-Negligible	Negligible
Very Low	Moderate/-Minor	Minor	Minor/-Negligible	Negligible	Negligible/-None

A1.27 Each effect is described and evaluated individually through the combination of all of the relevant factors and assessed as either significant or not significant. For landscape and visual effects, those effects identified at a substantial, major, major/moderate or moderate level (bold type within matrix above) are generally considered to be significant and those effects assessed at a moderate/minor, minor, minor/negligible or negligible level are considered to be not significant.

A1.28 In certain cases, where additional factors may arise, a further degree of professional judgement may be applied when determining whether the overall change in the view will be significant or not and, where this occurs, this is explained in the assessment.

Definition of Effects

A1.29 Taking into account the levels of effect described above, and with regard to effects being either adverse or beneficial, **Table EDP A1.6** represents a description of the range of effects likely at any one receptor.

Table EDP A1.6: Definition of Effect

Effect	Definition
Substantial	Effects which are in complete variance to the baseline landscape resource or visual amenity.
Major	Effects which result in noticeable and fundamental alterations to the landscape resource or visual amenity.
Moderate	Effects which result in noticeable but non-fundamental alterations to the baseline landscape resource or visual amenity.
Minor	Effects which result in slight alterations to the landscape resource or visual amenity.
Negligible	Effects which result in barely perceptible alterations to the landscape resource or visual amenity.
None	No detectable alterations to the landscape resource or visual amenity.

A1.30 Effects can be adverse (negative), beneficial (positive) or neutral. The landscape effects will be considered against the landscape baseline, which includes published landscape strategies or policies if they exist. Changes involving the addition of large-scale man-made

objects are typically considered to be adverse as they are not usually actively promoted as part of published landscape strategies. Accordingly, the assessment of landscape effects as a result of these aspects of the proposed development will be assumed to be adverse, unless otherwise stated within the assessment.

A1.31 Visual effects are more subjective as people's perception of development varies through the spectrum of negative, neutral and positive attitudes. In the assessment of visual effects, the assessor will exercise objective professional judgement in assessing the level of effects and, unless otherwise stated, will assume that all effects are adverse, thus representing the worst-case scenario.

Cumulative Effects

A1.32 Cumulative effects generally occur where there may be simultaneous or sequential visibility of two or more developments of the same type and scale, or where the consideration of other schemes would increase an effect identified. Where other similar schemes are in the planning system and made known to the applicant, or are under construction, these are considered in conjunction with the proposed scheme.

Annex EDP 2
Glossary of LVIA Terms

TERM AND DEFINITION
Baseline
The existing (pre-development) landscape and visual context of a study area, including landscape fabric, landscape character and existing views. The landscape baseline is not static and may be changing for various reasons. The landscape baseline can also consider such factors and describe the likely future landscape character of the landscape, without the proposed development.
Effects
A predicted change in the environmental baseline as a result of the proposed development. Effects can be positive or negative.
Field Pattern
The pattern of hedges and walls that define fields in farmed landscapes (LI/IEMA 2002).
Intervisibility
Two points on the ground or two features are described as "intervisible" when they are visible from each other.
Landscape
Landscape results from the way that different aspects of our environment (physical, social, aesthetic and perceptual) interact together and are perceived by us: • Physical elements – e.g. geology, landform, soils, flora and fauna; • Social elements – e.g. land use, enclosure patterns, and the patterns, form and scale of settlements and other built development; • Aesthetic factors – e.g. colour, form, visual texture and pattern, sounds, smells and touch; and • Perceptual factors – e.g. memories, associations, stimuli and preferences.
Landscape Capacity
The degree to which a particular landscape character type or area is able to accommodate change without significant effects on its character. Capacity is likely to vary according to the type and nature of change being proposed.
Landscape Character
Landscape character arises from a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of physical and social elements, aesthetic factors and perceptual aspects in the landscape.
Landscape Character Areas (LCAs)
Single unique areas that are discrete geographical areas containing one or more landscape types.
Landscape Character Types (LCTs)
Generic units of landscape that display a distinct, consistent and recognisable landscape character.
Landscape Condition
Description of the maintenance and condition of landscape elements and the degree to which landscape elements are representative of the landscape character area.
Landscape Element
A physical component (both natural and manmade) of the landscape.
Landscape Fabric
The elements and features that constitute the physical components of the landscape, including ground vegetation, hedgerows, trees, shrubs, walls, fences and vernacular structures.

TERM AND DEFINITION
Landscape Units
An umbrella term for landscape character areas and landscape character types.
Landscape Value
The importance or value of the landscape to society, usually based on landscape designations or policies as indicators of recognised value.
Mitigation
Measures, including any process, activity or design that will avoid, reduce, remedy or compensate for the predicted effects of a development on the environmental baseline.
Public Access
Land with public access includes: • **Definitive rights of way** – public footpaths, bridleways, cycle routes, Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATS) and highways. Shown on Definitive Rights of Way maps held by the Local Authority; • **Permissive paths and bridleways** – routes where there is public access with the permission of the landowner. Such routes are usually closed at least one day a year to prevent establishment of a public right of way; • **Public open space** – areas designated for specified public uses, usually in the ownership of the Local Authority. Includes parks and recreation grounds. Shown on Local Development Plans; • **Beaches** – the public have permitted access to much of the foreshore (intertidal zone – between high and low tide marks) owned by the Crown Estate, and on land above high water mark owned by the Local Authority. Some beaches above high tide mark are privately owned and some beaches and foreshore have restricted access for military purposes; • **Access land** – land where public access is currently permitted with the permission of landowners. Includes land outlined in purple on the OS Explorer (1:25,000) sheets and with: o No symbol – land open to public with permission of owners; o White oak leaf in purple box – National Trust, always open; o Purple oak leaf in white box – National Trust limited access; o Tree symbols in purple box – Forestry Commission; o Single leaf in purple box – Woodland Trust; and o White “AL” in purple box – other access land. • **Open access land** – areas of mountains, moor, heath, down, common land and coastal foreshore that have been designated under Section 2 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The right of access is for walkers only and does not extend to cycling, horse riding or driving a vehicle, nor does the right of access apply to developed land, gardens or cultivated land. Under the CRoW Act 2000, there was a process of consultation that allowed the right of appeal for those with a legal interest in the land, and for sensitive ecological or archaeological sites to be excluded. Conclusive maps showing the areas designated as open access land (Registered Common Land and Open Country) are now available from Natural England (in England) and the Countryside Council for Wales (in Wales).

TERM AND DEFINITION
Viewing Distance
That distance that a viewpoint illustration should be held from the eye in order for the illustration to match the scale of the actual view when used in the field to identify the location and scale of the proposed development.
Visibility
Visibility is a measure of the distance that can be seen by the human eye at any one time. Daylight visibility will depend on several factors, including: • Atmospheric transparency (governed by the solid and liquid particles held in suspension in the atmosphere); • Degree of contrast between an object and the background against which it is observed; • Position of the sun; and • Observer's visual acuity.
Visual Receptor(s)
An individual observer or group of observers who are capable of experiencing a change in the view.
Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)
The ZTVs consider the 'bareground' situation and assume excellent visibility with no atmospheric attenuation. The ZTVs therefore represent the maximum potential, theoretical visibility i.e. the worst-case situation. In reality, other components of the landscape such as forestry, trees, buildings etc. will introduce screening effects which, coupled with the atmospheric conditions, will reduce this visibility, in some instances to a considerable extent.

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Figures

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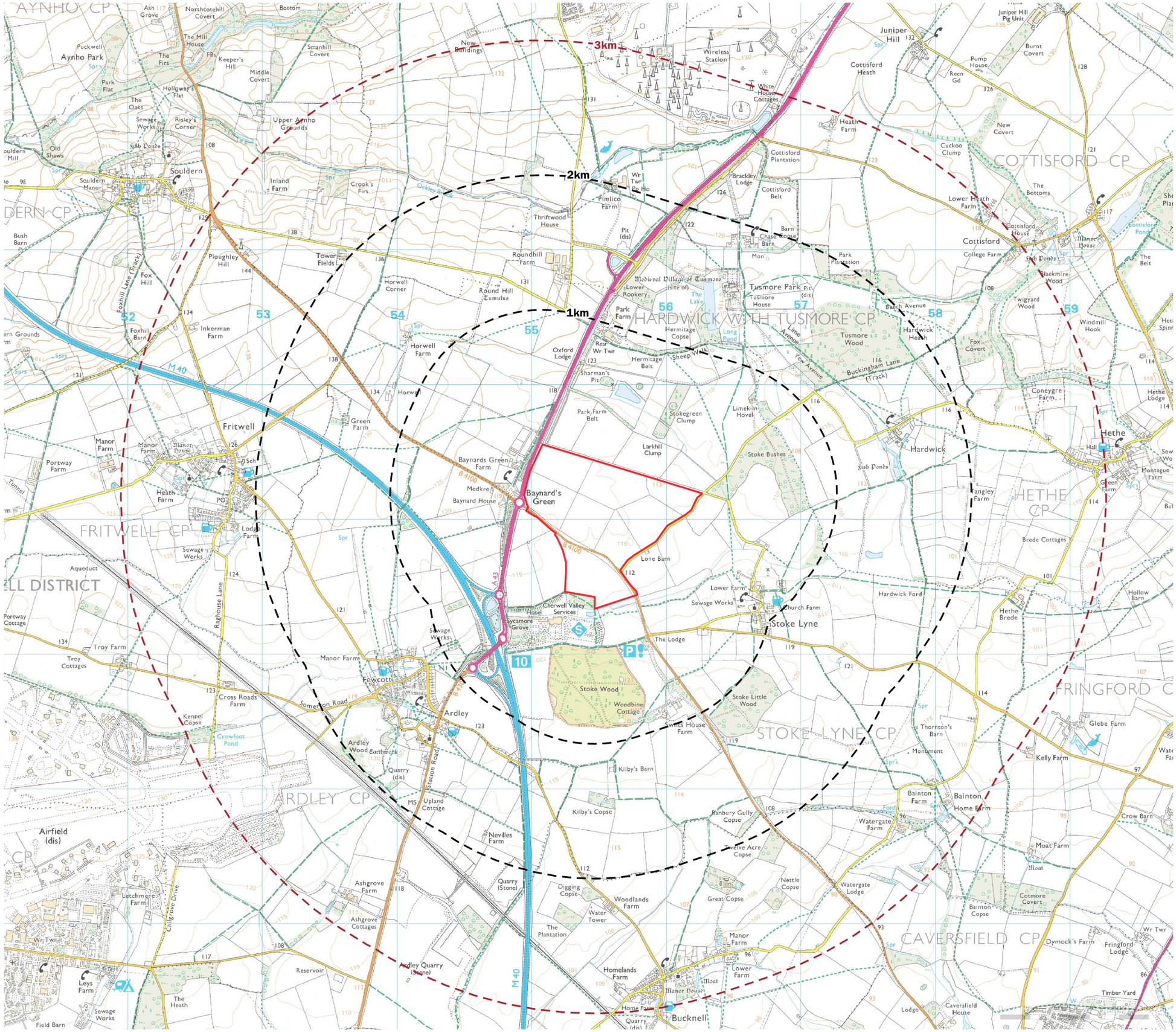

client

Tritax Symmetry Ardley Ltd

project title

Symmetry Park, Ardley

drawing title

Figure 9.1 Site Location and Site Context

date	**16 DECEMBER 2021**	drawn by	**LCH**
drawing number	**edp2355_d019b**	checked	**BC**
scale	**1:871,427,723 @ A3**	QA	**RB**

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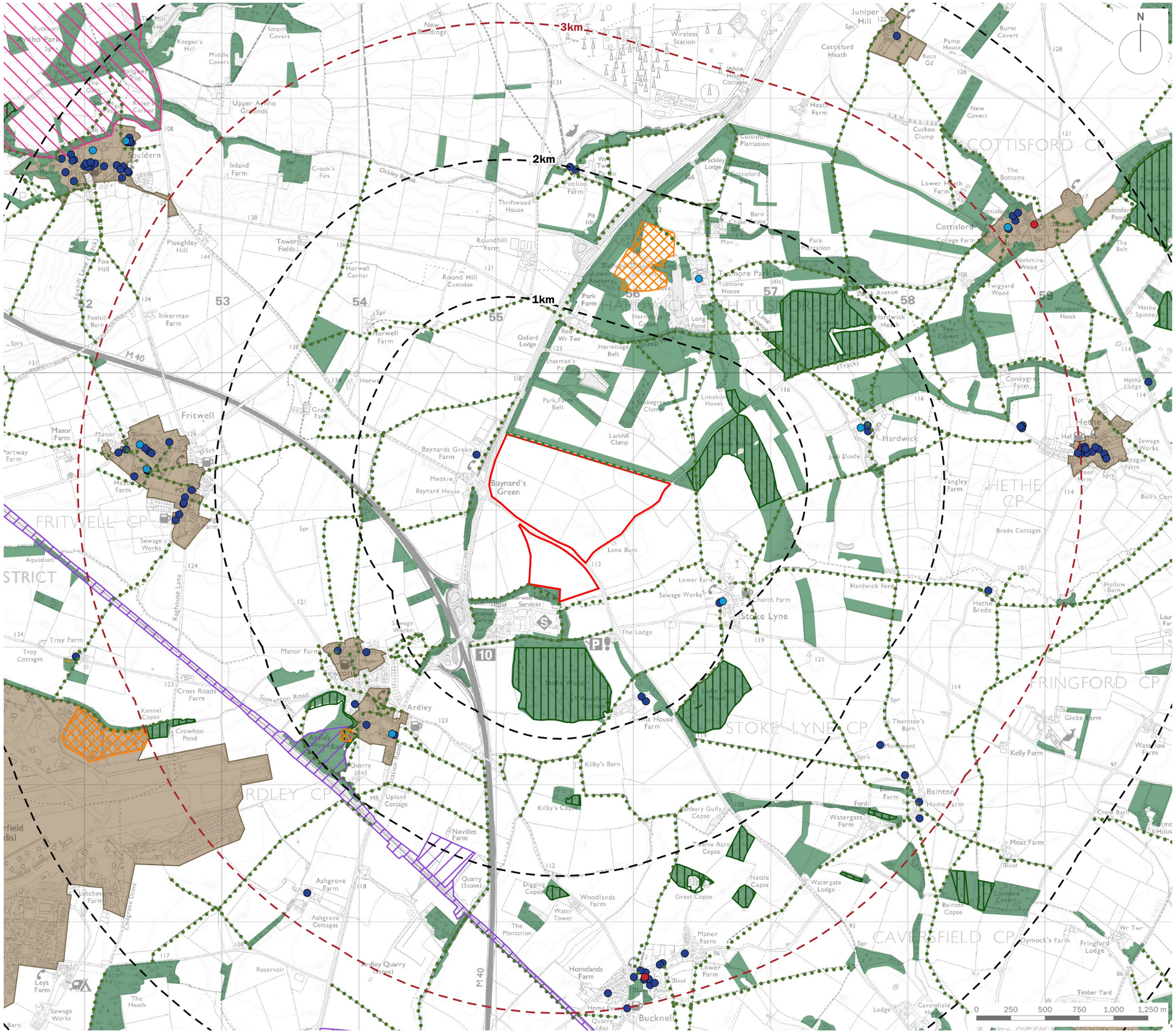

Site Boundary

Range Rings (at 1km intervals)

3km Detailed Study Area

Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

Ancient Woodland

National Forest Inventory

Conservation Areas

Scheduled Monuments

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Registered Parks and Gardens

Listed Buildings

Grade I

Grade II*

Grade II

client

Tritax Symmetry Ardley Ltd

project title

Symmetry Park, Ardley

drawing title

Figure 9.2 Environmental Planning Context

date	**15 MARCH 2024**	drawn by	**JFr**
drawing number	**edp2355_d020d**	checked	**BCo**
scale	**1:27,000 @ A3**	QA	**RBa**

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