
7th November 2023

Land West of Chilgrove
Drive and North of
Camp Road, Heyford
Park

Wendy Lancaster
PGDipLA PGDipUD
CMLI FRSA

Appeal between Richborough Estates and
Cherwell District Council

Volume 3: Summary

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Summary

- S.1. My name is Wendy Lancaster, I am Director of Landscape Planning at Tyler Grange Group Ltd, and I specialise in landscape and visual planning issues associated with development.
- S.2. I hold an honours degree and post graduate diploma in Landscape Architecture from the University of Gloucestershire. I hold a second post graduate diploma in Urban Design from the University of Westminster. I have been a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (LI) since 2006 and Registered Practitioner in Urban Design with the Urban Design Group since 2010. I was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of the Arts in 2016 for my contributions to the development of the understanding and review of Green Belt.
- S.3. Tyler Grange Ltd was instructed in August 2020 to provide landscape and visual baseline and on-site analysis to understand the capacity for, and to identify opportunities and constraints to, potential residential development on land north of Camp Road to the south-east of RAF Heyford. This was followed by a review of the ecological opportunities and constraints in September 2020.
- S.4. In July 2021, Tyler Grange Landscape and Arboricultural teams were instructed to undertake assessments of the likely implications of proposed development within the Site. At the time, it was not considered that a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) was required due to the likely low level of effects on the landscape and visual resource but, after discussions with the Council's Landscape Officer, Tim Screen, this was upgraded to a full LVIA (CDA15). The LVIA was later appended as part of the Environmental Statement (ES). No significant or near significant landscape or visual effects were identified as part of the EIA process.
- S.5. After the Council refused permission, Tyler Grange Landscape was instructed in August 2023 to provide landscape expert witness services to the forthcoming Planning Appeal.
- S.6. The evidence I have prepared here represents my professional opinion on the aspects of landscape and visual impact assessment, responding to the Council's Reasons for Refusal. I believe the facts stated in this evidence are true, accurate and have been prepared in accordance with the guidance of my professional institution (the Landscape Institute).

Landscape Officer and the Case Officer's Report

- S.7. Liaison with the Landscape Officer was undertaken prior to the production of the LVIA, and receptors, methodology and viewpoint locations were agreed (CDA15 Appendix 2). In his consultation response email dated 11th May 2022 (CDD11), Mr Screen wrote in reference to the LVIA that "having read through the comprehensive and proportionate LVIA I am in general agreement with its findings and conclusions".
- S.8. A Committee Report (CDC6) was produced by the Case Officer, Katherine Daniels, for the 9th March 2023 Planning Committee, setting out a recommendation for approval. The landscape and heritage issues were addressed by the Case Officer together in the Committee Report (CDC6)
- S.9. In paragraph 9.23, under the heading of 'assessment', the Case Officer refers to the development being within a greenfield site "which will have a physical and visual relationship with the development at Heyford Park" and that "the site will be bounded by development to the west and to the north". The Officer also notes in paragraph 9.23 that Chilgrove Road [sic], "which is planned to be upgraded to form the principal access route into the Upper Heyford Flying Field", forms a "barrier with open countryside to the east" The Officer also acknowledges that, although the Site was not allocated as part of PV5, "the site adjoining is allocated land...so the development will not be a standalone development but would relate well to the established and



future planned form of Heyford Park, contained between residential development to the west and Chilgrove Road to the east”.

- S.10. Paragraph 9.24 summarises the analysis of the Site, stating that the Appeal Scheme “would result in a natural continuum with the existing development, and would ‘round off’ Heyford Park, given Chilgrove Road to the east, and Camp Road to the south”.
- S.11. Paragraphs 9.30 to 9.35 discuss the policies relevant to the landscape elements of the Appeal Scheme, including the NPPF, saved policy C8 and C30, ESD13 and ESD15, and Neighbourhood Plan policy PD4. Under the heading of ‘assessment’, the Case Officer highlights in paragraph 9.36 that the Appeal Site was considered within the 2018 HELAA (CDG8) which considered that “the site could be developed without opening the development further into open countryside beyond” (CDG8 Appendix 4 page 78).
- S.12. Under the heading of ‘principle of development’, the Case Officer stated in paragraph 9.9 that “the site is relatively contained” and at 9.40 that “the site is well-contained, and with appropriate landscaping would not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the landscape setting” and, in paragraph 9.41 “there is sufficient distance between the site and Ardley, a mile-and-a-half to the northeast”. It then concluded in paragraph 9.45 that “the proposal...would blend in with the character and appearance of the locality and would be seen in conjunction with the wider Heyford Park development”.
- S.13. In the overall assessment of planning balance and conclusion of the report, the Case Officer stated in paragraph 10.3 that “development of the land would relate well to surrounding development and represent a natural rounding off”, going on to state that “other impacts would all be mitigated and controlled by condition” and that “overall, the balance of beneficial impacts would outweigh the identified harmful impacts, therefore planning permission ought to be granted”.

The Reason for Refusal and the Case Against the Appellant

- S.14. In order to distil the principal landscape and visual reasons for refusal and to focus the scope of my evidence, I have reviewed the Council and Rule 6 parties’ cases and the principal matters for discussion as noted at the Case Management Conference. The focus of the evidence has also been reduced in accordance with the agreed Landscape SoCG, to avoid the need to fully consider wider landscape and visual issues. It is noted that the element of RfR1 relating to views to and from the Conservation Area is a heritage point but views to and from the Conservation Area are addressed in this proof in terms of visual impact. For the overall planning balance, I defer to the evidence of Mr David Bainbridge, and for matters relating to heritage issues, I defer to Mr Thomas Copp.
- S.15. In terms of the structure of my evidence, I refer to the baseline as set out within the LVIA (CDA15), adding commentary where appropriate and respond to the reasons for refusal and disputed matters set out within the Statements of Case and the agreed Landscape SoCG.
- S.16. Reason for Refusal 1 addresses matters relevant to both landscape and heritage. This Proof deals directly with the views to and from the Conservation Area but does not address issues of heritage impact or historic setting. Any references to setting in this Proof, unless stated otherwise, relate to landscape or visual setting. For issues of conservation and heritage, I defer to the evidence and expertise of Mr Copp. In respect of the wider policy context and overall planning balance, I defer to the evidence and expertise of Mr Bainbridge.
- S.17. I have summarised the main matters as being:
- The relationship of the Site and the Appeal Scheme to the existing settlement, including the setting of the settlement;



- Impacts on views to and from the Conservation Area; and
- Effects on local landscape character.

Appeal Site and Context

S.18. The Appeal Site comprises three main areas:

- Eastern and largest field comprising arable farmland that has been recently left to fallow, bordered to the south, east and west by native hedgerow with some gaps in need of repair, and to the north by wire mesh fencing which separates the Site from the former RAF base to the north.
- North-western field comprising pastoral farmland with equestrian style buildings and drainage pond.
- Area of maintained amenity areas including mown grassland, ponds, hedgerow and immature tree planting with a series of ditches extending along the western boundary.

S.19. To the north of the agricultural fields, the land comprises part of the former RAF Upper Heyford base, which is designated as a Conservation Area. This includes areas of hardstanding, bunding and scrub, separated from the Appeal Site by a functional security fence. Beyond the areas of hard standing are some of the Hardened Aircraft Shelters (HASs) which are described in the Council's evidence base as being of historic importance. These are constructed from corrugated galvanised steel and covered with concrete.

S.20. To the west of the northern field and wetland corridor are Letchmere Farm and Heyford Grange. To the west of Letchmere Farm is land also forming part of the former RAF base and Conservation Area, comprising areas of open space and hardstanding used as large areas of car parking. To the west of Heyford Grange are areas of former RAF housing, with new housing on Hampden Square, forming part of Heyford Park.

S.21. The Site is situated within the context of the surrounding built form, with visual links to the HASs and security fence to the north and towards residential development glimpsed through the more vegetated edge to the west.

S.22. There are no relevant landscape designations within or in close vicinity to the Site, and it is agreed as Common Ground (CDE7 paragraph 8.29) that this is not a valued landscape as defined within the NPPF. There is no 'Non-coalescence zone' as exists to the west of the former airfield, designated under Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan (CDG4) Policy PD3. The land to the immediate north of the Appeal Site forms part of the RAF Heyford Conservation Area.

S.23. The surrounding consented schemes in the PV5 area all demonstrate that the Appeal Site is firmly in the context of the existing and emerging built form.

S.24. The appearance of the HASs to the north of the Appeal Site has been the subject of much debate, as set out in the following and previous paragraphs, having been recommended for removal in the earlier development brief (CDN2) for the former RAF base, highlighted as requiring screening within the 2003 appeal Inspector's Report (CDN4) and as adverse visual elements within the Conservation Area Appraisal (CDG5). Although these HASs are no longer proposed for removal, their adverse impact upon views from the wider landscape, and their being at odds with the surrounding rural character, is acknowledged in these early documents.

S.25. The Council's evidence base documents demonstrate a consistent acknowledgement of the adverse impact of the HASs on the surrounding views and landscape, and a clear indication that the Appeal Site is suitable for future residential development, as long as existing landscape infrastructure is maintained. This is supported by the draft allocation in the emerging Local Plan 2040 and the associated evidence base,



including the 2014 Cherwell Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (CDJ10 3.39), the 2018 HELAA (CDG8 Appendix 4, page 77 and 78), the 2022 Cherwell Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (CDH8 page 307) and the Sustainability Appraisal of the Cherwell Local Plan Review Interim Report (CDH5 page 47).

The Appeal Scheme, Its Evolution and Benefits

- S.26. The Appeal Scheme is set out in five separate parameter plans (CDA4-8), which were appended to the rear of the LVIA (CDA15 Appendix 5). An illustrative masterplan was also produced (CDA9), which was appended to the rear of the LVIA (CDA15 Appendix 6). The Landscape Strategy Plan was included as Plan 6 (CDA15 Plan 6). The Illustrative Masterplan was later updated (CDB14).
- S.27. The Illustrative masterplan demonstrates a scheme for up to 230 dwellings, 35% of which would be affordable. 5.9ha of the Appeal Site will be development for residential uses out of the total 11.68ha, leaving 5.78ha, i.e., 49.5%, as open space.
- S.28. Tyler Grange Landscape Planning and Ecology teams were instructed in late summer 2020 to identify opportunities and constraints to future residential development within the Appeal Site. An initial Landscape and Visual Analysis Note (13464/R01) and later Landscape and Visual Technical Note (13464/R02) were produced, setting out the relevant policy, landscape and visual baseline to help inform a series of opportunities and constraints to development. In paragraph 5.2 of the Technical Note, it made the following recommendations:
- “Locate the development parcels within the ‘grassland’ part of the site, with open space and recreation afforded to the ‘wet corridor’.
 - Carefully consider the treatment of the development parcels to the east of the site and the creation of the ‘new settlement’ edge.
 - Retain existing trees, hedgerows and woodland copses and set development parcels within this existing green network to provide the opportunity for a connected Green Infrastructure scheme and mature landscape framework. Retain and enhance the ‘wet corridor’ and there is an opportunity to enhance this corridor either as a recreational or ecological resource.
 - Promote new tree planting, replace and restock the hedgerow network and there is an opportunity to include the restoration and provision of new stone walls in accordance with the published landscape character and policy guidance.
 - There is an opportunity to improve the existing Public of Way network, providing new routes within open spaces/green corridors.
 - There is an opportunity to respond to the consented development to the west in terms of pattern, scale, materials and linkages.”
- S.29. The Design and Access Statement (CDA11 page 42) sets out the pre app discussions with the Council, including the recommendation from the Principal Planning Officer that the scheme should be landscape led and make best use of the land with a density up to 40dph. The original masterplan included a number of bungalows, but the Planning Officer felt that these were not justified in this location and that there was a justification for taller buildings in the centre of the scheme.



Effects

Landscape

- S.30. The LVIA (CDA15) did not identify any significant effects on landscape character.
- S.31. In the email correspondence between Mr Screen and Tyler Grange (CDA15 Appendix 2), it was agreed that the LVIA would focus its assessment on effects on the Farmed Plateau Landscape Type within the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS) (CDJ3) and the Upper Heyford Plateau Landscape Character Areas within the Cherwell Landscape Character Assessment (CDJ11), with Mr Screen requesting a written-only narrative of the landscape effects on the Cherwell Valley. Effects on the Cherwell Valley were later scoped out due to lack of intervisibility.
- S.32. An updated ZTV Model was produced, demonstrating development up to 13m within the Appeal Site, an extension above the original 10m sent to Mr Screen for agreement of views. The ZTV exercise undertaken, together with the on-site analysis, demonstrated that there would be no effects on the Cherwell Valley that would be caused by the Appeal Scheme. This is due to the intervening built form of Upper Heyford, the topography of the high point of the plateau and the sharper drop on the valley sides, and the intervening layers of vegetation. As a result, effects on the Cherwell Valley were scoped out in accordance with the GLVIA3 (CDJ1).
- S.33. The Appeal Scheme will not introduce elements into the wider landscape that are incongruous, i.e., 2-3 storey residential development set within the existing landscape framework. Even set within the existing landscape framework with no mitigation or enhancement, the Appeal Scheme would not change the character of the wider landscape to a notable extent. Furthermore, it will retain and enhance the existing landscape features, introduce new landscape features and increase public access, all beneficial effects.
- S.34. The effects on the identified landscape receptors are discussed in Chapter 4 of the LVIA (CDA15 page 30) and summarised within the tables in LVIA Appendix 8 and 9 (CDA15). The LVIA assessed effects on the local landscape character, represented by the Farmed Plateau Landscape Type (LCT), the Upper Heyford Plateau Landscape Character Area (LCA) and the Ploughley Limestone Plateau LCA, at Year 1 (completed development no mitigation planting) as medium/low magnitude and minor adverse significance, and at Year 15 (once mitigation has established but not necessarily matured) as low magnitude and minor beneficial significance. It similarly assessed effects on the site-specific landscape character as medium magnitude and minor adverse significance at Year 1, and low magnitude and minor beneficial at Year 15.
- S.35. My assessment is that the residual effects on the Site at Year 15 will be closer to neutral, with the improvements to the existing green infrastructure and the proposed public access to the wetland corridor balancing out the introduction of the built form.
- S.36. I am in broad agreement with the findings of the LVIA, as was the Landscape Officer, with the minor above difference in professional opinion.

Visual Effects

- S.37. The visual effects are set out within CDA15 Appendix 10 and within paragraphs 4.46 to 4.50. I have not sought to repeat the information within the LVIA here and, for the sake of brevity, refer to the LVIA, making updates where there have been changes in the existing or consented baseline, or where there are differences in professional opinion. The LVIA did not identify any significant effects on views.



- S.38. In the correspondence included in Appendix 2 of the LVIA (CDA15), a series of nine viewpoints were proposed and agreed with Mr Screen based upon a ZTV exercise undertaken at a ridge height of 10mAOD. Mr Screen proposed a single further viewpoint to the east of Viewpoint 4 (Viewpoint 10) (CDA15 Appendix 2). The ZTV model was later updated to account for a 13m ridge height (CDA15 Plan 3), which demonstrated little noticeable difference in theoretical visibility. The agreed viewpoint locations are demonstrated on LVIA Plan 4 (CDA15 Plan 4), together with the field verified zone of visual influence (ZVI).
- S.39. The on-site assessment demonstrated that views towards the Site were localised and limited to those from:
- Chilgrove Drive immediately adjacent to the Site (Viewpoint 7);
 - Camp Road over a limited distance to the south of the Site (Viewpoint 8 and 9);
 - Raven Close and the other small number of properties along the current eastern edge of Upper Heyford (Viewpoint 6) – identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal;
 - Bridleway 109/28/10 to the east of the Site (Viewpoints 4 and 10); and
 - Bridleway 422/3/10 to the south of the Site (Viewpoint 5).
- S.40. The 2014 Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (CDJ10) states in paragraph 4.3.12 that “visibility into the site is partially obscured by vegetation on the south and eastern field boundaries as users of Camp Road and Chilgrove Drive pass the site” and that “from the north and west, the site is only visible from within the former RAF Upper Heyford Site and therefore views to the general public are limited”. It goes on in paragraph 4.3.14 that “there is reasonably good potential to provide visual mitigation along the site boundaries without altering the overall character of the area”.
- S.41. The assessment of effects on visual receptors is set out in Chapter 4 of the LVIA (CDA15) and within Appendix 10 (CDA15 Appendix 10). These are summarised below for ease of reference.

Receptor (Representative Photoviewpoint Number)	Permanent Development - Year 1		Permanent Development - Year 15	
	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effect	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effect
People walking along and horse riders using public bridleways in middle distant views east of the site (Viewpoints 4 and 10)	Medium/High	Moderate adverse	Medium/Low	Minor adverse
People walking along and horse riders using public bridleways in middle distant views south of the site (Viewpoint 5)	Medium	Moderate adverse	Low	Minor adverse
Residents and people using the roads and pavements in Wellesley Close (Viewpoint 6)	Low	Negligible	Low	Negligible



Receptor (Representative Photoviewpoint Number)	Permanent Development - Year 1		Permanent Development - Year 15	
	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effect	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effect
People using the local road network of Camp Road, Chilgrove Drive and the routes which connect to the B4030 and B430 (Viewpoint 7, 8 and 9)	Medium	Minor adverse	Low	Negligible
Residents of existing dwellings which surround the site. Letchmere Farm buildings to the north west, static homes to the south west and new dwellings within the former RAF airfield.	Medium/High	Moderate adverse	Medium	Minor adverse

Cumulative Effects

- S.42. The LVIA addresses the cumulative effects with the agreed developments (CDA15 paragraph 4.51 onwards). These comprised the developments set out in CDA15 Appendix 2 and agreed with Mr Screen, which comprised the 2016 application for land south of Camp Road, the Pye Sites and the hybrid application. The plan in Appendix 2 of the LVIA does not include the outline schemes to the north of the Site, which are also relevant in considering cumulative effects, as these had not yet received planning permission at the time of writing the LVIA.
- S.43. The cumulative schemes that have the greatest impact upon the understanding of the effects that will arise from the Appeal Scheme are the Pye scheme to the west and the commercial area to the north with HGV access, for which detailed proposals are not yet available, although an indicative masterplan has been created. The comprehensive parameter plan (CDN5) demonstrates the area to the immediate north-east of the Site as being a 'commercial area', with a 'creative city' to the north (area 22) and with residential development to the north-west. The parameters show a strip of land with potential for buildings up to 10.5m in height wrapping around part of the northern boundary of the Site, with areas rising up to 18m to the north-east of this above. This element of the scheme is in outline but an indicative masterplan for the commercial area and creative city is shown in the extracts from the DAS for the hybrid application (CDN7), which shows large scale buildings immediately abutting the north of the Appeal Site in the east, with further large scale buildings beyond and residential development to the north-west.
- S.44. Both the Pye scheme and the Creative City/commercial area to the north will change the landscape context of the Appeal Site, increasing the amount of development perceived within the landscape and views and resulting in residential development immediately to the west. These developments will also be visible from the wider landscape to the east and south, again increasing the influence of built development and road infrastructure on these areas and changing the relationship of Upper Heyford with the wider landscape in this location. The Pye schemes will bring development east of the mature vegetation along the current eastern boundary of the Conservation Area, changing the character of the landscape to be far more influenced by residential development than is currently the case. The proposed buildings to the north shown as up to the 18m proposed in the parameters plan, if built in a similar fashion to that shown on the indicative masterplan, will increase the amount of commercial development within the view, and change the visual relationship of the Appeal Site with the HASs to the north. The character of Chilgrove Drive will change in its entirety, from



a blocked off rural lane to a new pedestrian and cycle link with a large scale HGV compliant road established to the east, and the proposed junction will change the character of this stretch of Camp Road.

- S.45. Both of these schemes will change the character of this edge of the existing settlement to be firmly physically and visually related to Heyford Park. Both of these schemes will result in a reduced sensitivity of the Appeal Site and local landscape to the Appeal Scheme, thus reducing the significance of effects further.
- S.46. The increase in development proposed to the west and north of the Appeal Site will reduce the sensitivity of receptors to the east and along Camp Road to development, as the views will be increasingly characterised by development. The Appeal Scheme will result in smaller, even negligible, effects when considered cumulatively against the agreed schemes, as it will be seen against the backdrop of new development. Once the vegetation along the HGV route has become established, the magnitude of effects on views from the east in particular will be reduced to low magnitude and negligible to neutral significance.
- S.47. In his consultee response, as set out in the Committee Report (CDC6 paragraph 7.9) the Mr Screen stated that “the LVIA is comprehensive and proportionate and [I] am in general agreement with its findings and conclusions”.
- S.48. This was acknowledged in the Officer’s Report (CDC6) which stated that “overall, the balance of beneficial impacts would outweigh the identified harmful impacts, therefore planning permission ought to be granted” and in the Sustainability Appraisal for the draft allocation LPR42a which assessed effects of the proposed Upper Heyford allocations on landscape as neutral.

Responding to the Reasons for Refusal and Disputed Matters

The Relationship of the Site and the Appeal Scheme to the Existing Settlement, Including the Setting of the Settlement

- S.49. The first point is that there is no designation in this area, or a policy in principle at national level, that protects the settings of settlements. Setting of Conservation Areas is a heritage issue and does not form the subject of this Proof of Evidence. There is no designation in this area relating to the separation of settlements, as exists to the west of Heyford Park under Neighbourhood Plan (CDG4 Policy PD3).
- S.50. The 2022 Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (CDH8) states that LS HEY2 is “influenced by the existing settlement edge of Heyford Park to the west” and that “from the northern part of the assessment unit, to the north of Camp Road there are visual links to the RAF Upper Heyford base” (CDH8 page 305). The 2014 Upper Heyford Capacity Assessment (CDJ10) refers to the Appeal Site as part of site 146, stating that “within the south the area is greatly influenced by vehicles passing along Camp Road and the junction to the south east” (CDJ10 paragraph 4.3.7).
- S.51. Perceptually and visually, during summer, the relationship between the Appeal Site and the adjacent settlement is reduced, although views towards the recent development to the north-west and the HASs to the north were possible.
- S.52. The Appeal Site is currently unbuilt, as is the land to the immediate west in PV5 within the Pye site. However, the Site immediately abuts the PV5 allocation to the north and west and is immediately adjacent to man-made structures within Heyford Park to the north. Once the consented schemes to the west have been completed and the Creative City to the north, the Appeal Site will be even more firmly bordered by development, increasing the physical connection of the Appeal Scheme to Heyford Park. Paragraph 1.1 of the Officer’s Report (CDC6) states that “the land does however relate well to the remainder of the planned development at Heyford Park, with approved residential development immediately to the west, the planned



future permanent access-way to the Flying Field commercial areas using Chilgrove Drive immediately to the east and the Flying Field area just to the north”.

- S.53. The proposed HGV access road to the east will create a strong physical feature to the east of the Site, creating a strong defensible boundary to development. This is referenced in the Officer’s Report (CDC6 paragraph 9.23) which states that “there is a barrier with the open countryside to the east, which is separated by Chilgrove Road [Drive], which is planned to be upgraded to form the principal access route into the Upper Heyford Flying Field”. The 2014 Upper Heyford Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (CDJ10 paragraph 3.39) refers to site 146 (including the Site and the Pye site to the west) as having “the potential for residential development up to the existing site boundaries defined by Camp Road to the south and Chilgrove Drive to the east”. The 2018 HELAA (CDG8 page 78) states that “the remaining part of the site [i.e., the part not within PV5] could potentially be suitable as it could provide a logical extension to the residential dwellings to the west” and that “development could be contained without opening up a wider area of countryside”.
- S.54. The Appeal Site and the surrounding location are both visually and perceptually related to the existing settlement and this relationship will strengthen once the Pye scheme to the west has been constructed, and even further once the Creative Hub and proposed HGV route are completed.
- S.55. The Appeal Scheme will not result in development extending any further east than the proposed Creative Hub to the north, or the draft allocation to the north and provides a consistent built edge with the defensible woodland barrier to the south. It will not extend development within Heyford Park any further south than is currently the case, and will not result in the physical, visual or perceptual merger of settlements, as agreed within the SoCG. It will also not result in residual significant effects on landscape or views.
- S.56. As set out in the Committee Report (CDC6 paragraph 9.45) “the proposal...would blend in with the character and appearance of the locality and would be seen in conjunction with the wider Heyford Park development,” and (paragraph 10.3) that “development of the land would relate well to surrounding development and represent a natural rounding off”.

Impacts On Views To And From The Conservation Area

- S.57. The reference to the views to and from the Conservation Area in the RfR appears to relate primarily to the associated heritage issues rather than visual impact, given the lack of views from the Conservation Area towards the Appeal Site. However, for completeness, views to and from the Conservation Area are addressed here. The Conservation Area is a heritage designation, rather than a landscape one, but this can result in a subsequent increase in the value of the view within the LVIA. This Proof does not address heritage setting issues which are covered in the Heritage Proof (CDE15), produced by Mr Copp. Visual effects are dealt with in the LVIA (CDA15) appendix 10 and within this Proof within paragraphs 4.53 onwards.
- S.58. Of the views identified that feature the Appeal Site, the following are directed towards the Conservation Area:
- Views from the bridleway south of Camp Road (viewpoint 5);
 - Views from the poorly accessible bridleway east of Chilgrove Drive (Viewpoints 4 and 10);
 - Chilgrove Drive (Viewpoint 7); and
 - Camp Road (Viewpoint 8).
- S.59. Of the views identified that feature the Appeal Site, the following are directed away from the Conservation Area:



- Views from Raven Close and Willesley Drive (Viewpoint 6) – identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal; and
 - Views along Camp Road (viewpoint 9).
- S.60. Views from Camp Road are assessed together as they are sequential and comprise the experience of both exiting and entering the Conservation Area.
- S.61. The Appeal Scheme will only appear in one identified view from the Conservation Area, that which is illustrated by Viewpoint 6, and will be set behind the layers of intervening vegetation and in the context of the existing and proposed built form. The LVIA (CDA15), the findings of which were agreed by the Council's Landscape Officer (CDA15 Appendix 2), assessed the effects on receptors represented by Viewpoint 6 at both Year 1 and Year 15 on the current baseline, as being negligible. This is because these views are already characterised by development in the area of the Appeal Site, and the Appeal Scheme will not change the character of these views, especially when taking into account the emerging baseline.
- S.62. The Appeal Scheme appears in a limited number of views towards the Conservation Area, namely those from a localised stretch of the PRoW south of Camp Road, from where views are already characterised by relatively modern development, and from the east, from where development is visible in views, albeit it to a notably lesser extent than in views from the south. The nature of these views from the east, however, will change with the emerging Pye and Heyford Park schemes to the north and west, both of which will create a developed context to the Appeal Site and result in the Appeal Scheme being seen set against a more developed edge than is currently the case.
- S.63. The 2014 Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (CDJ10) states that “views to the general public are limited” (paragraph 4.3.12) and that “there is reasonably good potential to provide visual mitigation along the site boundaries without altering the overall character of the area” (paragraph 4.3.14).

Effects On Wider Landscape Character

- S.64. It is important to note that effects on wider landscape character were not included within the RfR. However, they were raised within the Council's Statement of Case (CDE3 paragraph 3.3) and set out as an issue within the CMC Note (CDE6).
- S.65. The visual assessment has demonstrated that the Appeal Scheme will only be perceived within the wider landscape from a limited number of locations, namely from c. 500m of local bridleways to the south and c. 1km to the east and from Camp Road. This demonstrates that the extent of landscape that will be indirectly affected by the Appeal Scheme will be localised. This is reflected in the 2014 and 2022 Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessments.
- S.66. The LVIA assessed the effects of the Appeal Scheme on the wider landscape character as being of minor adverse significance at Year 1 and minor beneficial significance at Year 15, as assessed against the current baseline. This reflected the partially degraded character of the landscape, particularly in the north of the Site near to Chilgrove Drive, where the adjacent areas of the former Flying Field and blockage of Chilgrove Drive create a somewhat fringe character. This adverse impact of the HASs is acknowledged in the Lead Appeal Inspector's Report (CDN4), the Conservation Area Appraisal (CDG5 page 68) and the RAF Upper Heyford Revised Planning Brief (CDN2). The airbase is also noted as a 'dominant visual element' on figure 2 on page 8 of the Conservation Area Appraisal (CDG5). It also reflects that the Appeal Scheme is not out of context with the wider character area, comprising low rise residential development set within the existing vegetated structure. It also took into account the proposals to retain and enhance the existing landscape infrastructure and to increase public access to the amenity wetland corridor. The Council's Landscape Officer stated that



he was in broad agreement with the findings of the LVIA and considered it to be “comprehensive and proportionate”.

- S.67. The Pye scheme will further establish residential development as characteristic of this area, changing the edge of the Upper Heyford to the west from being more vegetated in character to residential development. The Creative City to the north will increase the number and scale of buildings perceived in the landscape to the north of the Site, again creating a more built character to the edge of Upper Heyford in this locality. The proposed HGV route to the east will introduce road infrastructure and associated structures, such as lighting columns, further urbanising the area of the Site. The emerging baseline firmly places the Appeal Site and this edge of Heyford Park in the context of notable larger than domestic scale development. Set in the context of this, the Appeal Scheme will have a negligible impact upon the wider landscape character.

Compliance with Policy

- S.68. As set out in the overarching Statement of Common Ground (CDE7 paragraph 8.7), there is no conflict with any policies of the Development Plan relevant to landscape and views other than those set out in the matters of disagreement and reiterated below for ease of reference:

- CLP 2011-2031 Policy ESD13: Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement;
- CLP 2011-2031 Policy ESD15: The Character of the Built and Historic Environment;
- CLP 1996 Policy C33: Protection of Important Gaps of Undeveloped Land; and
- MCNP Policy PD4: Protection of Important Views and Vistas.

- S.69. Policy ESD15 is multi layered and only the points are relevant to landscape:

- the fourth which starts ‘Contribute positively to an area’s character...’;
- the sixteenth which starts ‘Integrate and enhance green infrastructure...’.

- S.70. The Appeal Scheme is in accordance with the relevant policies listed above.

Conclusion

- S.71. Tyler Grange Landscape Planning, Ecology and Arboriculture were involved with the earliest stages of the development of masterplan proposals for the Appeal Site in 2020, providing contextual baseline analysis and recommendations for the future development of the masterplan.

- S.72. The Appeal Scheme was recommended for approval with the Committee Report (CDC6) stating in paragraph 9.40 that “the site is well-contained, and with appropriate landscaping would not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the landscape setting” and, in paragraph 9.41 “there is sufficient distance between the site and Ardley, a mile-and-a-half to the northeast”. It then concluded in paragraph 9.45 that “the proposal...would blend in with the character and appearance of the locality and would be seen in conjunction with the wider Heyford Park development”.

- S.73. The Appeal Site comprises two areas of unremarkable farmland and an area of relatively modern amenity land with ponds, which has been managed for amenity uses, but which is in private ownership. The Appeal Site is physically adjoined to the north and north-west by the former Upper Heyford RAF base, which is characterised in this area by concrete HASs, security fencing and artificial landforms. The north-west is bordered by the buildings associated with Letchmere Farm. To the west, separated by Heyford Grange, is



an area of former airmen's bungalows with modern development on Hampden Square beyond, both of which are glimpsed through the boundary vegetation from the east.

- S.74. The current edge of Upper Heyford is more vegetated to the west, with mature vegetation situated around the former officers' married quarters around Larsen Drive. This mature vegetation reduces the amount of built form visible to the immediate west of the Appeal Site, with development glimpsed above and between planting during summer months increasingly so during winter. The edge of the former RAF base to the north is more poorly vegetated and is characterised by security fencing and the HASs, the latter of which are acknowledged in multiple documents as having an adverse landscape and visual impact.
- S.75. The GLVIA3 refers to the future baseline, stating that the baseline studies should "establish[es] the existing nature of the landscape and visual environment in the study area, including any relevant changes likely to occur independently of the development proposals" (CDJ1 Table 3.1 page 27).
- S.76. The land to the immediate west of the Appeal Site is consented for residential development in the Pye scheme. This development will both bring settlement up to the western Site boundary but will also result in residential development extending beyond the current vegetated edge of Upper Heyford (see Insert TG 24). The context of the views from the east will change to include residential development as part of the backdrop to the Appeal Site. This will create a more developed character to the edge Heyford Park in this area.
- S.77. Land to the north is subject to outline planning permission as set out in the hybrid application. Although the exact layout of this scheme is not yet known, the land use parameter (CDN5) demonstrates the Creative City to the immediate north of the Appeal Site, rising up to 18m above future ground levels. Indicative layouts for this area demonstrate buildings immediately adjacent to the Appeal Site boundary, which is currently poorly vegetated. The agreed land use parameter also shows an access road at a scale and design to accommodate HGVs, situated immediately to the east of Chilgrove Drive. This road will bring a comparatively major piece of infrastructure to the east of the Appeal Site, further reducing any rural character to this area.
- S.78. An LVIA (CDA15) was produced in 2021, the scope of which was agreed with the Council's Landscape Officer who referred to the document as "comprehensive and proportionate" and stated that he was in general agreement with its findings.
- S.79. The LVIA assessed effects on both the character of the Site and the surrounding landscape character (as illustrated by the agreed published landscape character areas) as being of minor adverse significance at Year 1 and minor beneficial at Year 15. I have assessed the residual effects at Year 15 as being closer to neutral than beneficial, particularly in relation to effects on the character of the Appeal Site. These effects arise from an acknowledgement of the historic context of the Appeal Site and local landscape, their slightly degraded landscape infrastructure and historic context, balanced against the Appeal Scheme not being out of context with the surrounding land uses and built form.
- S.80. The LVIA identified the localised and limited visual envelope of the Appeal Scheme, limited to stretches of bridleways to the south and east, Camp Road and Chilgrove Drive, and an isolated view from the edge of the Conservation Area to the south-west. The LVIA assessed residual effects on users of the bridleways to the south and east of the Appeal Site, and along Camp Road, as being of minor adverse significance, with those on residential receptors within the Conservation Area to the south-west as negligible.
- S.81. Once the consented schemes to the west and north are completed, the context of the Appeal Site will change significantly. The Pye scheme to the west will cause the built edge to extend beyond the mature vegetation east of Larsen Road, becoming more visible in the surrounding landscape, including the Site and Chilgrove Drive. The Appeal Scheme will be seen set against this in views and will have a much lesser effect on views as a result. The Creative Hub to the north will establish tall commercial scale buildings in the view to the north



of the Site, which will be visible in views from the bridleway to the south and east. The Appeal Scheme will be seen in front of these, softened by vegetation along Camp Road, and will have a much reduced effect on views from this location as a result. The Pye scheme and Creative City to the north will also change the character of Camp Road, with Pye scheme resulting in the removal of the hedgerow along the northern side of Camp Road, to be reestablished behind a large set back with new footway and bus stop. This will change the character of this stretch of Camp Road, increasing the suburban character of this area. The proposed HGV route to the east of the Appeal Site will appear in views from both Camp Road, where it will form a large junction with associated lighting columns, and from the bridleways to the east, where it will create an urbanising influence in front of the Appeal Site.

- S.82. The Appeal Site is already situated immediately adjacent to the existing built form of the former airbase in the north, and residential development to the north-west. As such it has an existing physical relationship with Heyford Park. It also has a perceptual relationship with Heyford Park, appearing in sequential views with other development within the settlement and visually connected to surrounding buildings, albeit filtered by vegetation to the west. Once the Pye scheme has been completed, the visual relationship with the built edge of Heyford Park will be firmly established, and the physical connection complete on three sides.
- S.83. The Appeal Site does appear in views towards the Conservation Area, but these are limited in extent and are views already characterised by modern built form. The Appeal Site appears in a single identified view from the Conservation Area, where it is set behind the vegetation on Camp Road, in a view already characterised by modern development and static homes. The Appeal Scheme will not change the character of identified views.
- S.84. The 2014 Sensitivity and Capacity Study included the Appeal Site as part of the wider site 146, including the Pye sites to the west, stating that “the site has the potential for residential development up to the existing site boundaries defined by Camp Road to the south and Chilgrove Drive to the east and Larsen Road to the west as long as the existing site boundary vegetation is maintained”.
- S.85. The 2022 Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment assessed the Appeal Site as part of the wider LS HEY2, which included land to the south, stating that it was influenced by the existing settlement edge of Heyford Park to the west and by the RAF base to the north. It went on to state that LS HEY2 was of low-moderate sensitivity to residential development and that “land north of Camp Road is less sensitivity to [sic] due to the proximity to existing built development”.
- S.86. The 2018 HELAA assessed the eastern field of the Appeal Site in isolation, and the entire Appeal Site as part of a wider area including the Pye sites. In both instances, the sites were assessed as being suitable, available and achievable for residential development (CDG8 Appendix 4 pages 77 and 78). The HELAA concluded that the sites “could potential be suitable as it could provide a logical extension to the residential dwellings to the west” and that development could be accommodated in this area in a way that was “contained without opening up a wider area of countryside”.
- S.87. The Appeal Scheme will not have unacceptable effects on the local landscape or views, including views to and from the Conservation Area. The existing green infrastructure is to be retained as part of the scheme, with new areas of open space and native planting to be established throughout the development. None of the views identified in the Neighbourhood Plan (CDG4 page 34 table 4) will be adversely affected by the Appeal Scheme. The Appeal Scheme is in accordance with the identified policies in the Development Plan for the area.
- S.88. The Appeal Scheme will form a logical extension to Heyford Park, extending north further east than the Creative Hub to the north or the proposed HGV route to the east, and no further south than development within Heyford Park south of Camp Road. It has been identified as a suitable location for residential



development in evidence base documents dating back to at least 2014, and this is reflected in the Appeal Site forming part of draft allocation LR42a in the emerging Local Plan 2040. As set out in the Officer Report and as reflected by the Case Officer's recommendation for approval, "development of the land would relate well to surrounding development and represent a natural rounding off" and should be allowed.





**Tyler
Grange**

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