

**Review of Landscape and Visual Impact
Proof of Evidence of
Mark Cooper BA(Hons) DipLD CMLI**

Land East of Warwick Road, Banbury

Planning Inspectorate No. APP/C3105/W/24/33382111

Cherwell District Council Application No. 23/00853/OUT

30th April 2024

Declaration

The evidence which I have prepared and provide for this appeal, reference APP/C3105/W/24/33382111, in this Proof of Evidence is true and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.

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Qualifications and Experience

My name is Mark Cooper. I am Managing Director of MCA Chartered Landscape Architects Limited, a practice registered with the Landscape Institute (Practice No. 288). I hold a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Landscape Architecture and a Post Graduate Diploma in Landscape Design. I am a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI No.11698).

I have almost 40 years' experience as a Landscape Architect working, in the main, on large scale residential developments for national house builders.

I studied at Manchester Polytechnic School of Architecture and Landscape before moving briefly into local authorities in Liverpool City Council and London Borough Tower Hamlets working on urban improvement and green space initiatives.

In 1986 I moved into a private consultancy, Maurice Pickering Associates, and subsequently to ACD Landscape Architects in 1988 before establishing my own practice in about 1992. I have worked continuously since then, providing landscape consultancy to commercial developers, social housing providers and local authorities.

On occasions, I have appeared as expert witness on landscape matters in planning inquiries.

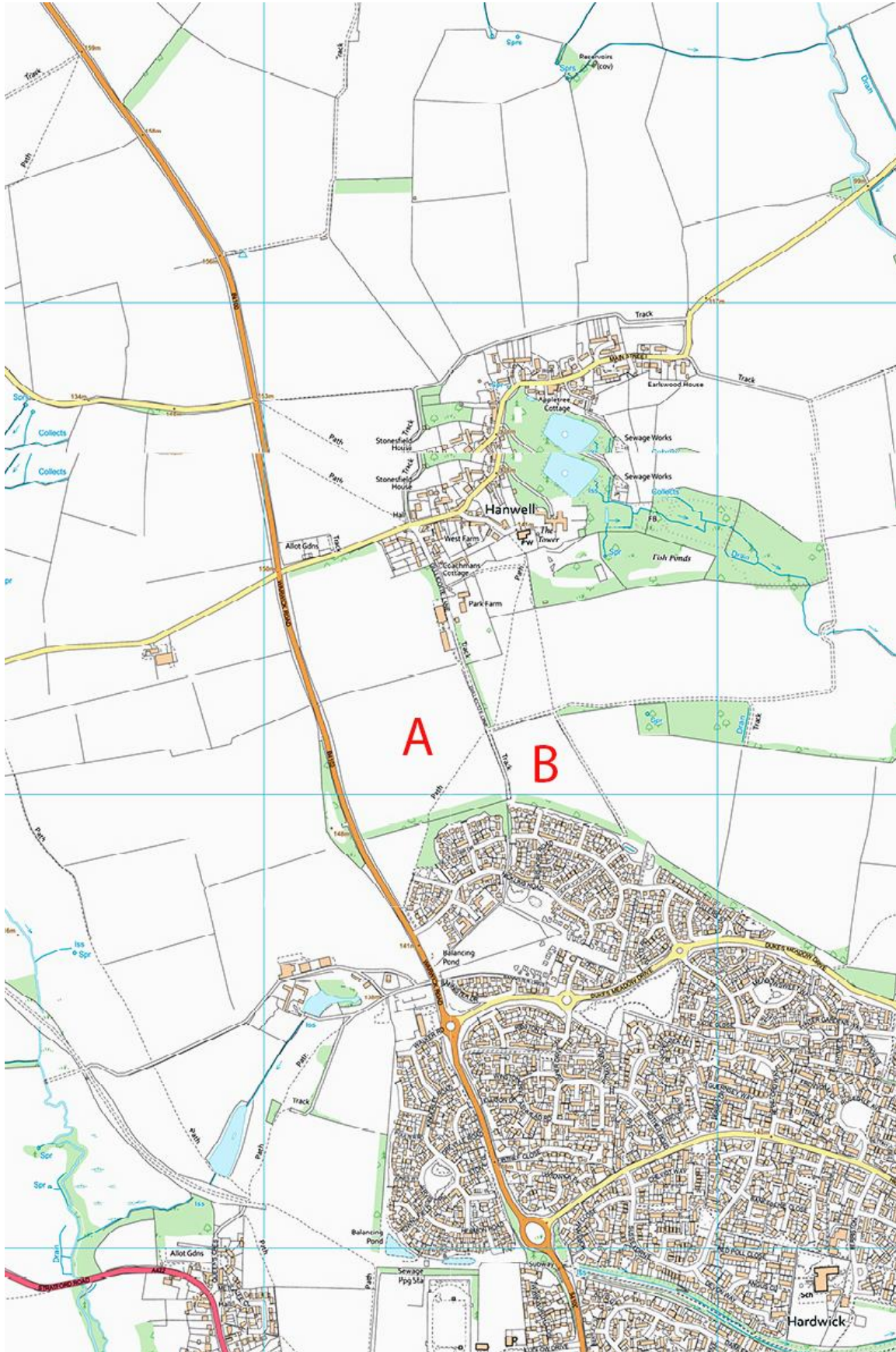
I serve as a panel member on *The Design Review Panel*, assisting developers and local authorities by means of national peer reviews of projects during the design and planning process.

I act as an 'Assessor' on behalf of the Landscape Institute to assess the suitability of prospective candidates for 'Chartership' within the institute.

I was first instructed by Cherwell District Council in July 2023 to prepare an independent review of the Landscape and Visual information submitted in support of Outline Planning Application 23/00853/OUT Land East of Warwick Road, Banbury.



Land East of Warwick Road Banbury – Red line indicates approximate site boundary



Land East of Warwick Road Banbury – Land Parcels A & B

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This document is my proof of evidence for the public inquiry. It draws on and incorporates my earlier independent review of the Landscape Impact and Visual Impact Assessment submitted in support of the development proposed by Vistry Homes in two land parcels, A and B, on the East side of Warwick Road; Application 23/00853/OUT.

1.2 My review is based on desk-top study of the supporting documents and by an in person assessment of the potential landscape impact of the development in views from existing villages, existing residential areas, roads and footpaths.

1.3 In preparing this independent review I had access to the supporting documents which formed the planning submission and the review makes particular reference to the following documents and sections;

Land East of Warwick Road, Banbury - Environmental Statement Chapter 6 Built Heritage and Archaeology - March 2023

Land East of Warwick Road, Banbury - Environmental Statement Chapter 7 Landscape and Visual - March 2023

Land East of Warwick Road, Banbury - Environmental Statement Appendix 7.1 Landscape and Visual Appraisal – January 2023

Land East of Warwick Road, Banbury – Design and Access Statement – October 2022

Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Incorporating Tree Protection Measures) – October 2022

Ecological Appraisal – October 2022

Environmental Statement Volume 4: Non-Technical Summary – March 2023

1.4 My proof of evidence is not intended to make a judgement on the planning implications of developing this site but will assess and comment on the rigour and depth of the supporting information which assesses the landscape and visual impact of the proposed development. I have also provided my own judgements as to the landscape and visual impact of the proposed development to assist the inspector. Matters of heritage significance and impact are beyond my expertise and I do not offer any comment on them in this proof.

2.0 Site Appraisal

2.1 The proposed development site is located on the east side of the B4100 Warwick Road north of the northern edge of Banbury which, at this point, consists of residential properties on De La Warr Drive and Bismore Road north of Dukes Meadow Drive, known collectively as Hanwell Chase.

2.2 The 12.63 Hectare site consists of two cultivated arable fields bounded by locally valuable hedgerows, with mature trees and woodland. The fields are divided by a tree-lined farm track being an extension of Gullicote Lane in Hanwell. Parcel A is located on the east side of Warwick Road (B4100) and, because of its proximity to the road, could be considered to be of reduced 'landscape sensitivity' in that its seclusion and setting are compromised by the presence of the road compared to a field in open countryside far from a major settlement. Parcel A is also visually contained in varying degrees by established trees and hedgerows around the field boundaries. The smaller Parcel B is exposed in views from the east by generally lower eastern boundary vegetation and falling topography.

2.3 The site constitutes a gap between the recent residential developments on the northern edge of Banbury i.e. Hanwell Fields, and the southern edge of the village of Hanwell defined by the buildings of Park Farm which project southwards from the village on Gullicote Lane. The LVA acknowledges the significance of this gap and proposes a margin of undeveloped land;

'at the north-eastern corner of Parcel A to emphasise the separation between the new settlement edge of Banbury and Hanwell'.

Currently, I consider the remaining 'gap' to be the minimum reasonable space to maintain the rural context of Hanwell as a self-contained village. The proposed development would remove the gap between the edge of Banbury and the edge of Hanwell and would amount to the absorption of Hanwell within the urban area. The Proposed Site Parcel A reads as a rural space distinct from the urban residential areas immediately to the south and road users heading north experience a sudden transition in character from urban to rural as the road levels after the climb out of Banbury. This transition is emphasised by the tall hedgerow with mature trees on the northern side of Hanwell Fields.

2.4 The Arboricultural Impact Assessment – October 2022 identifies 30 individual trees, 13 groups of trees, two hedgerows and one woodland. Of these 46 items, one is categorised as A, of high quality; 29 are categorised as B, of moderate quality; and 10 are categorised as C and of low quality. In addition, six items are categorised as U and are considered unsuitable for retention unless they can be retained safely for the wildlife benefits of decaying timber and nesting opportunities.

2.5 The Ecological Appraisal – October 2022 finds that the habitats on site are predominantly of limited intrinsic nature conservation value in as much as they are intensively managed arable fields. The report finds locally valuable hedgerows, mature trees and woodland which bound the fields providing a network of habitats across the site and which connect with the wider landscape.



Above – Parcel A looking south west from the north eastern corner on Gullicote Lane.



Above – Parcel B showing the southern boundary tree screen.

3.0 Development Proposals

3.1 The development proposals consist of up to 170 dwellings on the larger, western parcel accessed by a new site entrance on Warwick Road with the smaller eastern parcel being retained and enhanced for wildlife, developed for recreation and play and engineered for SuDS capacity.

3.2 The boundary hedgerows, mature trees and woodland on all sides, and including Gullicote Lane, are all proposed to be retained with the exception of the gap required to form the site entrance on Warwick Road.

3.3 The outline layout of the proposed built-form of the development is set-back away from the site boundaries to leave margins of undisturbed land which are proposed to be planted with mixed woodland copse and tree planting and seeded as wildflower meadows.

3.4 On the north side of the site the remaining margin is larger in an attempt to maintain separation between the development and the village of Hanwell and reduce impact on the conservation area.

3.5 In the north-eastern corner of the site a triangular area of woodland is proposed in an attempt to reinforce the separation between the proposed residential buildings and the existing village of Hanwell.

3.6 The absence of proposed development in the eastern Parcel B reflects the open, eastwards facing slope and is designed to maintain the currently green and wooded character of the area in views from the east. The retention of Parcel B as a green space also avoids the impact that an access road would have on the vegetation flanking Gullicote Lane.

4.0 Landscape Impact

4.1 This section considers the landscape information submitted in support of the Planning Application; both the existing condition and the proposed mitigation.

4.2 The existing landscape consists of two arable fields under rotational crops which have been historically subject to all the interventions associated with modern farming such as soil treatments, crop-spraying, annual ploughing etc. Aside from the built-development these two fields will be altered in character in that they will no longer support crop and therefore food production.

4.3 The Ecological Appraisal finds that the habitats on site are predominantly of limited intrinsic nature conservation value in as much as they are intensively managed arable fields. However, there are some notable species such as Skylarks which have adapted to crop rotation cycles to make 2 or 3 nesting attempts in the same field and to cope with the changes wrought by the growth and harvesting of the crops. Thus there is an intrinsic value to arable fields in addition to their contribution to the wider countryside character.

In the Scoping Comments (ES Chapter 2 Table 2.1) The Berkshire Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust notes

'The site consists of an arable field surrounded by hedgerows/woodland in an area that supports a rich variety of farmland bird populations, including priority species. Detailed breeding and wintering bird surveys and appropriate mitigation proposals will therefore be required. Depending on the outcome of breeding and wintering bird surveys, then with respect to any priority species impacted, off-site compensation will be needed unless it can be proved that the habitats provided on-site will be sufficient to maintain or enhance the same population of these species. On-site provision would be difficult or impossible for birds such as Lapwing, Golden Plover, Skylark and some other priority species unless large areas of the site were set aside as undisturbed habitat. It would not be acceptable to suggest that there is suitable habitat elsewhere for priority farmland species, since the territories in these areas would already be occupied, and this would be contrary to ecological theory of carrying capacity.'

However the impacts on breeding birds are not considered significant in the ES and the report asserts that Skylarks in *'small numbers can be readily accommodated within the field to the east of the site , in which only one Skylark territory was recorded and which likely has the capacity to support more territories'*.

I find this remark unjustifiably dismissive as the BBOWT advice (ES Chapter 2 Table 2.1) clearly states that suitable habitat elsewhere would already be occupied and therefore not available to priority species displaced from Parcel A by the proposed development. The presence of Skylarks on this land demonstrates its intrinsic value to wild birds which are able to breed and thrive on land which is actively farmed. The proposed development may set aside large areas of undisturbed land but this does not negate the impact on existing species or guarantee a net gain in biodiversity.

4.4 Each of the land parcels is enclosed by locally valuable hedgerows, mature trees and woodland which can remain almost completely intact given the form of development proposed in the application. Some of the field boundaries have been historically enhanced by supplementary planting, e.g. the belt of trees on the south side of Parcel A consists of the remnants of a traditional field boundary hedge of Elm, Ash Hawthorn and a double row of planted Beech trees and a single row of planted Scots Pine trees forming an unusually dense and high screen. Similarly, the southward extension of Gullicote Lane includes tree species such as Horse Chestnut and Lime which would have been planted rather than naturally self-seeded. It is assumed that this enhancement of the field boundaries to create a 'parkland' character is historically associated with the land-owners in Hanwell village.

4.5 The development proposal include the protection and retention of all the existing boundary hedges and trees except for the gap in the managed hedge on the western boundary required to create a new site entrance off Warwick Road.

4.6 The development proposals include the provision of 7.1ha of public open space in relation to an overall site area of 12.63ha over both Parcels A and B thus establishing a landscape setting for the new development and reducing the visual impact of the development in the wider landscape context by providing space for woodland screen planting. This public open space will include;

- Wildflower Meadow and Parkland - 4.94ha
- Woodland planting to enhance the existing hedgerows along the northern and southern site boundaries.
- Woodland planting area in the north eastern corner of Parcel A.
- Grassland area for sports in the north west corner of Parcel A - 0.45ha
- Attenuation Basins in Parcel B - 0.23ha.
- Natural Play Space - 0.15ha.

The retention of Parcel B in its entirety and the introduction of new trees and woodland planting, wildflower meadows and attenuation basins will have a positive impact on biodiversity over the baseline arable field condition. Parcel B is currently visible in distant views from vantage points to the east such as Hardwick Hill Cemetery due to its topography and distinctive shape. The introduction of the elements described above will, in time, visually merge Parcel B with the surrounding woodland and hedgerows and make a long-term positive contribution to the integrity and connectivity of the vegetation on the east side of the ridge.

4.7 The development proposals also include an outline landscape strategy for the built-up area in Parcel A which will serve to create an attractive residential development with the following principal features;

- The overall residential area is set-back from all the site boundaries and the built area will be subdivided into smaller blocks by the primary and secondary access roads creating a potentially pleasant residential environment set within, and subdivided by, landscape areas.
- The primary access roads are proposed to be structured with groups and lines of new trees which will create a matrix of green links between the blocks of houses helping to soften the built area and link the residential areas with the surrounding parkland and new woodland areas.
- The primary roads are also proposed to be drained with rain-gardens in which the surface water drains into planted areas before entering the main drainage system. This will contribute to surface water quality due to the filtration provided by the rain-garden medium and will also make a significant contribution to wildlife habitat and biodiversity. Properly maintained rain-gardens can be very attractive with a seasonal progression of plants and flowers and, even in winter, a pleasant appearance.
- The secondary roads, driveways, parking areas and courtyards are proposed to be laid in permeable paving or to drain to SuDS features such as rain-gardens or swales.

4.8 In summary, the form of the proposed development takes account of the findings of the landscape assessment and adapts the layout accordingly. The ES states;

'As part of the Proposed Scheme, measures to mitigate any visual impacts and enhance the landscape value and visual quality of the Site are integral to architectural and landscape design work and particularly pertinent to the Proposed Scheme. The Proposed Scheme will be of high architectural and landscape quality and design, taking full account of the setting of the Site, particularly the Site's relationship with the wider rural landscape to the east. If any adverse visual effects are identified through the assessment, mitigation measures will be considered such as through choice of scale, massing, materials and finishes; landscape strategy; and screening construction.'

I consider that in terms of landscape setting and context the Proposed Scheme has taken account of the findings of the ES as follows;

- The ES recognises the potential impact of the proposed development on Hanwell village and proposes an area of new woodland in the north-eastern corner of the site in an attempt to maintain separation.

- The ES recognises the potential impact of the proposed development on the existing residential areas and proposes a new woodland belt along the face of the existing southern boundary screen.
- The ES recognises the potential impact of any built development on Parcel B and also the potential impact of even providing vehicular access to Parcel B which would affect the trees lining Gullicote Lane.

Notwithstanding these features of the Proposed Scheme, which do respond to the findings of the ES, my judgement is that the overall effect of the Proposed Scheme is harmful to landscape character as detailed in Section 6 below.

5.0 Landscape and Visual Appraisal - Environmental Statement Chapter 7

5.1 This section reviews the approach and conclusions of the following document submitted with Application 23/00853/OUT 'Landscape East of Warwick Road, Banbury';

Environmental Statement Chapter 7 - Landscape and Visual Appraisal – January 2023

5.2 In ES Chapter 7 Clause 7.10 Table 7.2 the report acknowledges '*Effects considered likely to be significant*' as being the following;

- Changes to the landscape character of the site.
- Changes to the landscape character of the site context, including relationship between Banbury and Hanwell.
- Changes to the visual amenity experienced by receptors within 1km of the site.

I agree that the above criteria are indeed the fundamental considerations in considering development on this site.

5.3 The Environmental Statement Chapter 7 - Landscape and Visual Appraisal – Table 7.3 describes the preparation of a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) calculated using Digital Surface Modelling. The ZTV was not submitted as part of the Planning Application as it is a purely theoretical zone of visibility which ignores the presence of trees, hedges, buildings etc. and could suggest a far wider zone of visibility of the proposed development than is actually possible in the real world.

5.4 By means of site visits on foot and on roads the ZTV was refined by the applicant into a Zone of Primary Visibility (ZPV) in which all the real world factors affecting the potential visibility of the site were noted. This exercise was undertaken in Winter when the natural screening offered by deciduous tree and hedge canopies was at a minimum.

5.5 In clause 7.19 the Landscape and Visual Appraisal describes the ZTV being '*refined by walking and driving local roads, PRoWs and other publicly accessible viewpoints to arrive a more accurate field-tested ZPV*'. It states that the ZPV is '*where views of the Proposed Scheme will normally be close ranging and open*'. However the report acknowledges a zone of visibility beyond the ZPV that is less open, being partly screened or filtered by trees, hedges or buildings. Views from within this zone, outside the ZPV, will include the Proposed Scheme which while not immediately noticeable will be a perceptible addition to the view.

It is my opinion that dismissal of the distant, obscured and filtered views of the site is unjustified and tends to underrate the magnitude of visual impact of the scheme. For example, a distant church tower glimpsed amongst trees might be said to enhance a view whereas a glimpse of modern houses detracts from a landscape by signalling its limits.

5.6 A night-time review of the site was also undertaken to consider the potential effects of the development's lighting on the Hanwell Community Observatory. The results confirmed that no adverse effects to bat species or Hanwell Community Observatory would result from the proposed scheme.

5.7 Chapter 7 of the Landscape and Visual Appraisal describes the Baseline Landscape Resource in clauses 7.43 to 7.45. The two Parcels, A and B, are described as 'undesigned' but both contain features which are characteristic of the local area i.e. hedgerows and associated tree cover. Clause 7.45 states that;

'The Site does not represent.....a landscape of any great importance or distinct character. Indeed, it is for the most part representative of the wider agricultural landscape and in this sense is an entirely 'ordinary' parcel of agricultural land in land use, topographical and hydrological terms. It is adversely affected, in a sensory manner, by its proximity to both the existing development within Banbury to the south and also to Warwick Road (B4100) which bounds the Site to the west.'

I consider this statement to be a misrepresentation of the value of this apparently insignificant pair of arable fields which may indeed be 'ordinary' but any rural landscape is made up of a matrix of 'ordinary' fields and this does not diminish the value of the individual elements in making up the whole. The existing development which forms the northern edge of Banbury may well 'adversely affect' the Proposed Site but this does not justify further development; otherwise where will it stop? The very position of these otherwise 'ordinary' fields between Banbury and Hanwell gives them an elevated level of value in landscape terms. The context of settlement is therefore not, on balance, supportive of further development, but rather the reverse.

5.8 Chapter 7 of the Landscape and Visual Appraisal describes the Baseline Visual Resource or the extent Zone of Primary Visibility in clause 7.46;

- Circa 320m to the north filtered by trees and hedgerows of Main Street, Hanwell.
- 300m to the north-east contained by woodland. Filtered longer distance views are available from circa 1.6km to the east and north-east.
- To the south-east clear views of the site are available 520m from the boundary and glimpsed views from the business park circa 2m to the east.

- To the south, views in and out of the site are heavily filtered by the woodland belt which skirts the northern edge of Hanwell Chase.
- To the west the trees and hedges along Warwick Road filter views of the site while long distance views are potentially available from the opposite valley side 1.3km to the west.

5.9 Chapter 7 of the Landscape and Visual Appraisal in clause 7.48 describes publicly accessible locations with views of the site to be *'limited in extent'*. 'Visual Receptors' who would be *'potentially able to perceive a change in visual amenity because of the Proposed Scheme'* would be users of PRowS, residents of Gullicote Lane, Hanwell and users of transport routes i.e. Warwick Road and Main Street, Hanwell.

5.10 The subsequent clause 7.49 refers to a number of visual receptors beyond the 1km radius of the site boundary but considers the effects on these wider receptors to be insignificant and therefore they are discounted.

The site is potentially visible in views up to 2km from north-east to east and, for example, it is possible to visually locate the site, and in particular Parcel B, in views from Hardwick Hill Cemetery and other points on Southam Road. In July 2023, Parcel B had a bright green crop which aided identification. It should be noted that the rooftops of existing houses on Bismore Road in Hanwell Fields can be seen from 2km east through a gap in the tall line of trees at the south-eastern corner of Parcel B.

The site is not visible in distant views from the south due to the presence of intervening residential areas and the rising topography.

The site is not visible in views from 2km to the north due to the topography and the intervening tree groups and hedgerows around Hanwell.

The site is intermittently visible from 2km north-west, i.e. Horley, to south-west, i.e. Wroxton, but is very difficult to pick out due to the relative topography, the intervening valley and the multitude of hedgerows and trees in the landscape.

5.11 The report makes the following valid points in regard to assessing the potential visual impact of the development;

- GLVIA3 states a preference that the 'worst case' scenario is used for visual assessment. The visual impact assessment was therefore undertaken in February when leaf cover was at a minimum.
- The assessor will exercise 'objective professional judgement' in assessing any impact and will assume that all visual effects are adverse thus representing the worst-case scenario (Clause 7.38).

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- Effects can be moderated by maturation of landscape strategies (Clause 7.38).
- A key principle of landscape assessment is that the assessment should take account of the effect of any proposed mitigation (GLVIA3, paragraph 6.45) (LVA Clause 7.56).

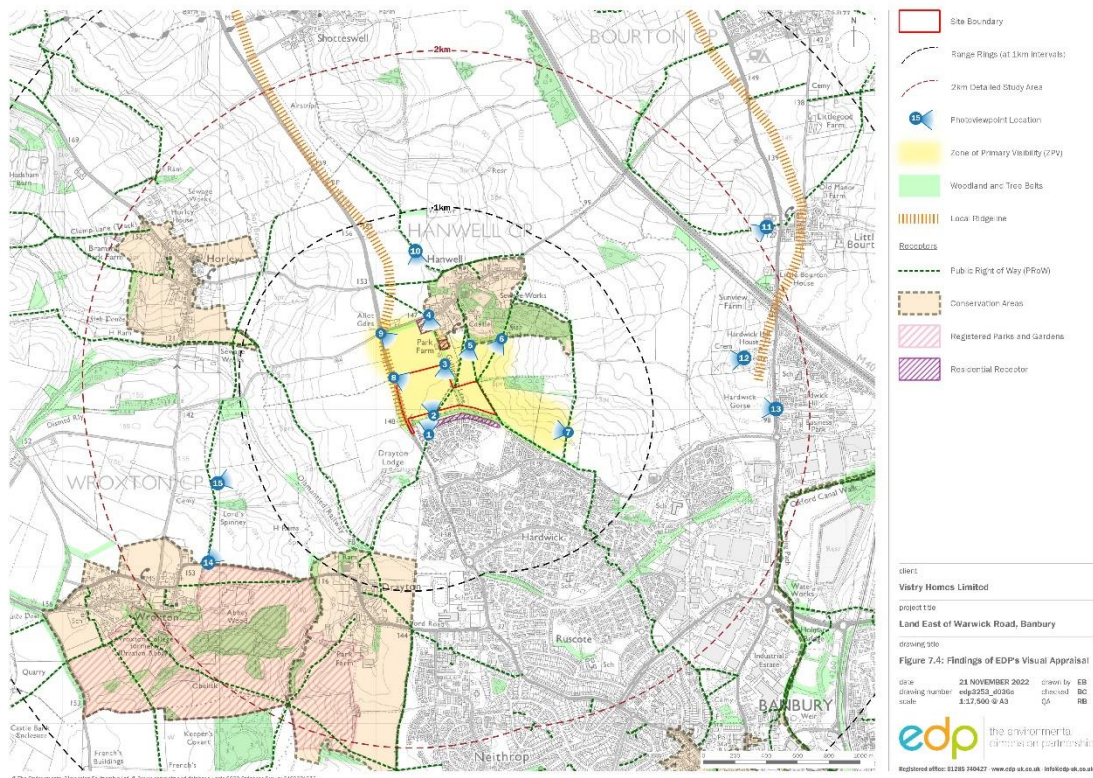
5.12 Chapter 7 of the Landscape and Visual Appraisal in clause 7.51 makes the point that;

- ‘Views from private residential properties are not protected by national planning guidance or local planning policy’.
- ‘The visual amenity of residential receptors is considered to be of very high sensitivity’.

The LVA considers the visual amenity of following residential receptors;

- Properties along the northern edge of Hanwell Fields.
- Residential property of Park Farm, Gullicote Lane, Hanwell.
- Properties at the western extent of Hanwell.

5.13 Chapter 7 of the Landscape and Visual Appraisal in clause 7.54 Table 10 selects 15 ‘Representative Photoviewpoints’ as shown below;



These Photoviewpoints are reviewed in section 7.

5.14 Chapter 7 of the Landscape and Visual Appraisal in clauses 7.56-7.58 describes **‘Primary and Tertiary Mitigation’** summarised as follows;

Construction Stage

- Phasing of the development to reduce the prominence the prominence of construction works on the local skyline (I assume this means that the development will not be built all at once but area by area so that the visual impact on the skyline is reduced).
- Controlled lighting to reduce obtrusive light through best practice and limited hours.
- Construction to be controlled by an approved CEMP.

Operational Stage

- Built form only in Parcel A;
- Built form set-back away from the Parcel A boundaries;
- New woodland planted in the NE corner of Parcel A to maintain separation from Hanwell.
- New woodland in Green Corridor along western boundary.
- PRoWs retained and Gullicote Lane vegetation enhanced.
- Max. height of new dwellings 11.5m.
- New habitat, wildflower meadow and parkland across both Parcels.
- Play provision across both Parcels.

5.15 LVA Chapter 7 Clauses 7.60-7.124 assesses the **Effects, Secondary Mitigation and Residual Effects;** of the Construction Stage;

Construction Stage

Changes to Landscape Character of the Site

Transition from agricultural landscape to predominantly urban development with landscape and visual effects caused by site clearance, earthworks, hoarding and fencing, temporary structures and stockpiles, lighting, scaffolds, vehicles, building work and landscaping followed by removal of temporary facilities.

In clause 7.62 the ES describes the following effects on landscape character due to construction activity; *‘direct, temporary, short-term, adverse effects which are considered to be Moderate to Major, to Major for Parcel A and Major for Parcel B’.*

Construction Stage

Changes to Landscape Character of the Site Context

In clause 7.67 the ES describes the following effects on the landscape character of the site context due to construction activity; *'there is likely to be a direct, temporary, short-term, adverse effect which is considered to be Moderate to Major, to Major and will extend for only the duration of the construction stage'*.

Construction Stage

Changes to Visual Amenity experienced by Receptors within 1km of the Site

This section represents a thorough and comprehensive summary of the changes to visual amenity due to construction to users of PROWs, residents of Gullicote Lane, Hanwell and users of transport routes i.e. Warwick Road and Main Street, Hanwell.

5.16 LVA Chapter 7 Clauses 7.125-7.132 assesses the **Effects, Secondary Mitigation and Residual Effects;** of the Operational Stage;

Operational Stage

Changes to Landscape Character of the Site

LVA Clause 7.125 describes *'the change in landscape character as being inevitable following a change in land use, but it should not be seen as a detriment to the enjoyment and appreciation of the wider landscape'*.

In my opinion the above comment is a departure from the rigour of the assessment in that the development will indeed be detrimental to the enjoyment and appreciation of the wider landscape due to the change in character of the site from open field to built-up area.

Given the various mitigations already described, the section states that *'The magnitude of change is considered to be high at Year 1. Therefore, there is likely to be a direct, permanent, medium-term, adverse effect which is considered to be Moderate, to Moderate to Major at Year 1'* (LVA Clause 7.128).

After the proposed primary mitigation measures have matured the section asserts that; *'Over time the retention and enhancement of green infrastructure will strengthen existing landscape features of the Site and aid the Proposed Scheme assimilation into its landscape context, reducing the perceived magnitude of change to medium and effect to direct, permanent, long-term, adverse and Moderate, to Minor to Moderate by Year 15'*.

Thus in time the effect will still be adverse but the LVA suggests that impact will have been mitigated from 'Moderate, to Moderate to Major at Year 1' to 'Moderate, to Minor to Moderate by Year 15'. In my opinion

the 'Magnitude of Change' between open field and built-up area will always be 'High' and the 'Effect' of the development will always be 'Major' given the fundamental change in character of the field.

The section concludes in LVA Clause 7.132 that the changes in Landscape Character will be Significant at both Years 1 and 15 with the greatest perceived change being focussed on the development in Parcel A.

In summary, I consider that the appraisal of the changes to the Landscape Character of the site is weighted in favour of development and that, in reality, the change would be fundamental and long lasting.

Operational Effects upon Landscape Character of the Site Context, Including Relationship Between Banbury and Hanwell

LVA Clause 7.133 describes the change in Landscape Character as a result of the proposed scheme diminishing with distance which would be true of any development. The clause states that *'the Proposed Scheme will extend the settlement edge of Banbury marginally further north towards Hanwell'*.

Given that the proposed scheme, and its landscape setting, will occupy the one remaining field between the settlement edge of Banbury and the closest dwellings at the south-west end of Hanwell (Park Farm) the Proposed Scheme will effectively remove the separation between the town and the village.

LVA Clause 7.135 states that *'the perceived separation between the settlement edge of Banbury and the outlying settlement of Hanwell will be reduced compared to the baseline condition locally altering the character between these two settlements'*.

In my opinion this is a fundamental source of objection to the scheme.

The same clause also states that; *'where any viewing opportunities are available looking towards the Site from the wider setting, the Proposed Scheme will largely be seen with the backdrop of, or a relationship with, existing development within Banbury'*.

In my opinion this is exactly the flaw in the appellant's argument; the proposed development reads as a satellite and not a natural extension of the residential areas to the south which also face outwards/northwards and infer that they are the settlement edge . The tall dense screen of vegetation north of Hanwell Fields is perceived as the settlement edge with no spatial connection to Parcels A or B which are perceived as part of the countryside.

LVA Clause 7.137 states that the changes to the landscape character of the site context will create *‘an indirect, temporary, medium-term, adverse effect which is considered to be Moderate, to Moderate to Major at Year 1’*.

LVA Clause 7.138 states that by *‘Year 15 the magnitude of change will be marginally reduced to medium resulting in a direct, permanent, long-term, adverse effect, which is considered to be Minor to Moderate, to Moderate’*.

Again, the magnitude of change from open field to built-up area will create a direct permanent long term adverse effect which will still be ‘major’ in 15 years. The marginal reduction in the magnitude of change due to the growth of new trees and screening vegetation doesn’t alter the fact that the open field has been lost forever.

Operational Effects upon Visual Receptors within 1km of the Site

This section, LVA Clauses 7.142-7.225, refers to the photo viewpoints which will be addressed in section 7 of this review.

5.17 In summary, ES Chapter 7 Landscape and Visual, offers a thorough and methodical assessment of the likely significant environmental effects arising from the proposed scheme in relation to landscape character and visual amenity. However the assumption is made that time will reduce both the magnitude of change to the site and the adverse effect on the site. The issue though is the loss of the open field which will not be mitigated by the passage of time or the maturity of the associated new planting.

6.0 Landscape and Visual Appraisal - Environmental Statement Appendix 7.1

6.1 This section reviews the approach and conclusions of the following document submitted with Application 23/00853/OUT 'Land East of Warwick Road, Banbury';

Environmental Statement Appendix 7.1 - Landscape and Visual Appraisal – January 2023

ES Appendix 7.1 Clause 2.5 begins the EDP Site Assessment of Parcel A by making the point that Parcel A *'relates much more to the busy Warwick Road along its western boundary than to the wider vale landscape'*. The clause continues to state that Parcel A is well-contained on all sides except for the western boundary which has a *'well-maintained native hedgerow which allows clear visual connection with Warwick Road'*.

In my opinion, the statement that Parcel A relates to the Warwick Road more than it does to the wider vale landscape is not true or relevant in considering the proposed development.

The hedge on the western Warwick Road boundary has been seasonally flail mown by a tractor which does tend to promote low dense growth which serves well for bird habitat but also prevents the hedge species from developing a natural form and checks the development of large trees such as Ash and Oak which may have self-seeded within the hedge. My point is that 'well-maintained' is not necessarily an ideal and had the hedge been left uncut then Parcel A would have had a much less strong 'relationship' with Warwick Road.

In talking about spatial and character relationships it should also be said that Parcel A relates strongly to the landscape setting and context of Hanwell village. Gullicote Lane does signal a change in topography from the ridge to the valley side and Parcel B begins to fall away eastwards from this point but this doesn't render Parcel A somehow more valid for a change of use to an urban area.

ES Appendix 7.1 Clause 2.9 describes the marked difference in visibility of Parcel B which, due to the falling topography is effectively open to views from the east and outward views towards the east (See below).



Above – View east across Parcel B with retail and industrial warehouses visible in the NE of Banbury.

ES Appendix 7.1 Clause 2.11 refers to the physical separation that the site provides between the northern edge of Banbury and Hanwell *‘preventing their merging and coalescence’*.

This is an honest appraisal of one of the fundamental objections to developing this site.

ES Appendix 7.1 Clause 2.17 describes the site as *‘forming part of the rural/urban fringe between Banbury and Hanwell’*.

The meaning of this reference is not clear to me; there is nothing ‘urban’ about Parcels A and B.

ES Appendix 7.1 Section 3 describes the ‘Data Trawl’ undertaken as part of the LVA and concludes that the site is not covered by any ‘landscape designations’, has no ‘designated heritage assets’ within the site boundary, has no ‘designated ecological assets’ within or adjacent to the site boundary and the site has no trees or hedges subject to TPO’s or Ancient Woodland classification.

ES Appendix 7.1 Clause 3.11 states that *‘There are no policies which are specifically related to the site in the adopted local plan’*.

Policy ESD 13 ‘Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement’ is quoted *“Development will be expected to respect and enhance local landscape character, securing appropriate mitigation where damage to local landscape character cannot be avoided.”*;

Policy ESD 13 'Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement' also states that *"Opportunities will be sought to secure the enhancement of the character and appearance of the landscape, particularly in urban fringe locations"*.

Although the development proposals are supported by a scheme of landscaping which will, in time, contain and soften the impact of the development this will not result in a net gain that will compensate for the loss of the undeveloped field and nor will it *'secure the enhancement of the character and appearance of the landscape'* given the negative impact on the current open field condition.

Policy ESD 15: 'The Character of the Built and Historic Environment' is quoted *"New development will be expected to complement and enhance the character of its context through sensitive siting, layout and high quality design. All new development will be required to meet high design standards. Where development is in the vicinity of any of the District's distinctive natural or historic assets, delivering high quality design that complements the asset will be essential"*, new development should *"Contribute positively to an area's character and identity by creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness and respecting local topography and landscape features..."*

Even taking into account that the development will meet high design standards, it will still cause significant landscape and visual harm to the site itself and the wider landscape context.

Policy ESD 17: 'Green Infrastructure' *"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"*.

The objective of policy ESD17 is to maintain and enhance the green infrastructure. The policy lists the measures on how this will be achieved. This includes *"Protecting and enhancing existing sites and features forming part of the of the green infrastructure network"*. The site is accessible countryside in the urban fringe and is therefore *'green infrastructure'*. Its development will neither protect or enhance this site and is therefore contrary to the aims of policy ESD17.

ES Appendix 7.1 Clause 3.12 & 13 quotes Cherwell Local Plan 1996 Saved Policies C7 Landscape Conservation and C28 Layout Design and External Appearance. Policy C7 of the 1996 Local Plan has been replaced with policy ESD13. Policy C7 is not therefore relevant.

ES Appendix 7.1 Section 4 references the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS) 2004 and clause 4.7 is of particular note in relation to Parcel A and the proposed mitigation;

OWLS makes the following recommendations for consideration as part of future development proposals;

“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”.

“Conserve the open, spacious character of the landscape by limiting woodland planting on the more exposed ridge tops. Locate new planting in the dips and folds of the landscape and establish tree belts around airfields, quarries and other large structures to reduce their visual impact using locally characteristic native tree and shrub species such as ash, oak and beech”.

“Maintain the sparsely settled rural character of the landscape by concentrating new development in and around existing settlements. The exposed character of the plateau is particularly sensitive to visually intrusive development, large buildings and communication masts”.

The proposed development is therefore in contradiction of the above recommendations contained in OWLS 2004. The proposed woodland screen planting around the proposed residential area is contrary to the OWLS recommendation that new planting should be concentrated in the ‘*dips and folds of the landscape*’ and it fails to ‘*safeguard and enhance the open....character of the landscape*’.

ES Appendix 7.1 Clause 4.10 refers to Site A of the ‘Banbury Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study’ of which Parcel B forms a part;

Site A (including Parcel B) has a “*direct influence upon the setting of the Hanwell Conservation Area located to the north of the site due to the visual association.....combined with the strong field pattern, important historical hedgerows and association yet separation from Banbury contribute to the historical context of the area*”.

The assessment states that the western area of Site A (including Parcel B) “*forms part of the visual setting for the Hanwell Conservation Area which should be maintained*”.

The above advice is reflected in the omission of built-development in Parcel B.

ES Appendix 7.1 Clause 4.15 argues that, contrary to the statement in OWLS that “*Large scale arable fields dominate the landscape, with some medium-sized plantations partially obscuring the*

otherwise open views", EDP's assessment considers that 'the landscape atop the local ridgeline and its upper slopes is less open than described'.

In my opinion the '*open, sparsely settled character*' of the landscape and the '*pattern of hedgerows, stone walls, small woodlands and tree belts*' is no less valid than it was when OWLS produced their assessment in 2004.

Overall Sensitivity of the Farmland Plateau Landscape Type

Clause 4.20 finds that the Farmland Plateau Landscape Type has '*some capacity to accommodate change within the site without extensive detrimental impact upon the Landscape Type as a whole, resulting in a medium-low susceptibility and an overall medium sensitivity*'.

Given that the Farmland Plateau Landscape Type is undefined and extensive, the assessment of its ability to 'lose' two fields without detrimental impact is irrelevant in justifying the absorption of Parcel A into the urban fringe of Banbury.

Overall Sensitivity of the Site Character

ES Appendix 7.1 Clause 4.21 considers that Parcel A would be able to accommodate some change within its interior without causing fundamental damage to, and to even enhance, the '*vegetated appearance of the landscape between Banbury and Hanwell*'

In my opinion the construction of 170 houses on Parcel A could not be accommodated without fundamental damage to the relationship between Banbury and Hanwell and that woodland screen planting in mitigation of that damage would be incongruous in the wider landscape character described by OWLS in 2004.

ES Appendix 7.1 Section 8 states the conclusions reached as a result of the data trawl, field appraisal and based on professional judgement;

ES Appendix 7.1 Clause 8.3 *'Landscape and visual effects will be localised and contained within c 1km radius of the site'.*

The LVA indicates that there will be some potential views at least in the short term from 2km east. For example such views are possible of existing houses in Hanwell Fields from Hardwick Cemetery and it is very likely that the roof line of the proposed development will be visible from this location.

ES Appendix 7.1 Clause 8.4 *'the proposals aim to retain and enhance (where possible) the existing landscape fabric of the site and assimilate the site within its treed rural edge character'.*

I would agree that nearly all the existing vegetation would be retained and the proposals for enhancement are positive in relation to the proposed built development.

ES Appendix 7.1 Clause 8.5 states that *'the site has been sensitively designed through a landscape led approach to address concerns of the site in relation to landscape and visual amenity matters, the presence of the nearby Conservation Area and coalescence concerns between Banbury and Hanwell to ensure that the scale, form and appearance of the development would reflect and enhance the positive characteristics of the site's local context'.*

I would agree that the landscape proposals accompanying such a significant addition of 170 dwellings in an open field beyond the settlement boundary are as good as they could be and will help to soften the impact on the *'site's local context'.*

ES Appendix 7.1 Clause 8.6 describes the likely effects as follows;

- A moderate to moderate-to-minor long term adverse effect on the character of the site and its local context. (I don't agree that such a change of character from open field to urban built-up can be deemed 'moderate to minor' and would suggest that the adverse effect is at least 'moderate').
- It is not considered that the local character, i.e. Farmland Plateau Landscape Type, will be dramatically altered. (In my opinion, the landscape character of the local context is more relevant than the impact on the Farmland Plateau although the landscape character of Parcel A will be removed completely from the Farmland Plateau classification).

- Over time the maturation of new planting and the existing retained vegetation would combine to make the site appear as a green and appropriate development extension to the northern edge of Banbury.

(I don't agree that the design of the site reads as a development extension to Banbury; it's a stand-alone scheme which works hard to create its own context).

- The heavy screening within Parcel A will ensure that a well-vegetated gap will continue to be viewed between the northern edge of Banbury and Hanwell.

(The gap is currently a huge space devoid of structures and the addition of 170 dwellings will negate the sense of separation between village and town).

- Local Planning Policy; the proposals are said to be mindful ESD 13 'Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement' *"Development will be expected to respect and enhance local landscape character, securing appropriate mitigation where damage to local landscape character cannot be avoided."*; Although the development proposals are supported by a scheme of landscaping which will, in time, contain and soften the impact of the development, this will not result in a net gain that will compensate for the loss of the undeveloped field and nor will it *'secure the enhancement of the character and appearance of the landscape'* given the negative impact on the current open field condition.

- Policy ESD 15: 'The Character of the Built and Historic Environment' *"New development will be expected to complement and enhance the character of its context through sensitive siting, layout and high quality design. All new development will be required to meet high design standards. Where development is in the vicinity of any of the District's distinctive natural or historic assets, delivering high quality design that complements the asset will be essential"*, new development should *"Contribute positively to an area's character and identity by creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness and respecting local topography and landscape features"*.

- Policy ESD 17: 'Green Infrastructure' *"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"*. The objective of policy ESD17 is to maintain and enhance the green infrastructure. The policy lists the measures on how this will be achieved. This includes *"Protecting and enhancing existing sites and features forming part of the of the green infrastructure network"*. The site is accessible countryside in the urban fringe and is therefore *'green infrastructure'*. Its development will neither protect or enhance this site and is therefore contrary to the aims of policy ESD17.

- ES Appendix 7.1 Clause 3.12 & 13 quotes Cherwell Local Plan 1996 Saved Policies C7 Landscape Conservation and C28 Layout Design and External Appearance. Policy C7 of the 1996 Local Plan has been replaced with policy ESD13. Policy C7 is not therefore relevant.

7.0 Photoviewpoints

7.1 This section reviews the approach and conclusions drawn from the following document submitted with Application 23/00853/OUT 'Landscape East of Warwick Road, Banbury';

Environmental Statement Appendix 7.3 – Representative Photoviewpoints

7.2 Chapter 7 of the Landscape and Visual Appraisal selects a number of representative Photoviewpoints in clause 7.54 Table 7.10 which are intended to demonstrate the full range of locations and receptors impacted by the development;

Photoviewpoint EDP 1: PRoW 120/116/10 passing through Hanwell Chase Public Open Space



Above and Top – Photoviewpoint EDP 1



Above – An image from July 2022 taken from a similar viewpoint to EDP1

Photoviewpoint EDP 1, taken in February and therefore showing a ‘worst-case scenario’, demonstrates the filtering effect of the tall tree screen which runs along the southern boundary of Parcel A. As already mentioned, this tree screen includes a line of evergreen Scots Pine trees which tend to lose their lower branches as they mature and a double row of Beech trees which sometimes retain dead leaves through the winter. The landscape strategy for the proposed development proposes an additional belt of woodland copse planting on the northern side of this tree screen which will, in time, serve to reinforce the already significant visual screen.

In summary, the visual impact of the proposed development from the south will be significantly filtered, even in winter, due to the boundary vegetation and the landscape setting and configuration of the development on the proposed site.

ES LVA Chapter 7 Clauses 7.142-7.147 state that *‘the proposed dwellings will be seen as no more than a glimpsed roofline silhouette and will not rise above the existing canopy extents to become notable new features upon the skyline’*. The sensitivity of users of PRoW 120/116/10 is described as **‘Medium’**, the magnitude of change **‘Low’** and the indirect, permanent, long term adverse effect will be **‘Minor’** with a residual* effect **‘Not Significant’**.

I would agree with this conclusion for EDP 1.

*Residual effect i.e. after primary mitigation.

Photoviewpoint EDP 2: PRoW 191/6/30



Above – Images showing the approximate viewpoint of EDP2. The left hand image shows the field boundary hedge with trees on the northern boundary of Parcel A and the right hand image shows the denser double-row of trees and hedgerow which flank Gullicote Lane.

Photoviewpoint EDP2 is taken from the southern edge of Parcel A looking north and the report acknowledges that users of PRoW 191/6/30 will experience significant impacts during construction and after the project is complete. The route of the PRoW will be maintained in a ‘green corridor context’ with housing on both sides of the path.



Above – An image looking west along the southern edge of Parcel A showing the managed boundary hedge on the western edge of Parcel A and the mature tree belt along the west side of Warwick Road.

ES LVA Chapter 7 Clauses 7.148-7.152 describes the sensitivity of users of PRow 191/6/30 as **'High'**, the magnitude of change **'High'** and the direct, permanent, long term adverse effect will be **'Moderate to Major'** with a **'Significant'** residual effect.

I would agree with this conclusion for EDP 2.

Photoviewpoint EDP 3: Gullicote Lane



Above – An image showing the approximate viewpoint of EDP 3 at the north-eastern corner of Parcel A on Gullicote Lane.



Above left – The trees and hedgerow on the northern boundary of Parcel A. Above Right – Looking south along Gullicote Lane.

ES LVA Chapter 7 Clauses 7.153-7.158 describes the sensitivity of users of Gullicote Lane as **'Medium'**, the magnitude of change **'High'** and the direct, permanent, medium term adverse effect will be **'Moderate'** with a **'Not Significant'** residual effect.

I agree that the proposed development makes significant provision for maintaining the integrity of Gullicote Lane and focussing views along its length. However this does not alter the fact that the lane currently passes through open fields on either side and this perception will be permanently altered. The residual effect of the development will be at least **'Moderate'** in terms of the direct, permanent, adverse effect on users of Gullicote Lane.

Users of PRow 239/7/20

ES LVA Chapter 7 Clauses 7.159-7.164 describes the sensitivity of users of PRow 239/7/20 which runs along the eastern edge of Parcel B as **'High'**, the magnitude of change **'Medium'** and the indirect, permanent, long-term adverse effect will be **'Moderate'** with a **'Significant'** residual effect.

Views westwards into Parcel B from PRow 239/7/20 will still be filtered by boundary hedgerows and trees and Parcel B itself will be aesthetically enhanced by new tree planting and wildflower meadows.



Above – Parcel B looking north towards PRow 239/7/20 July 2023

Photoviewpoint EDP 4: Main Street in Hanwell



Above – A reference image from July 2022 taken from a similar viewpoint to EDP4

The impact of the proposed development from publicly accessible areas in the wider village of Hanwell will be minimal in purely visual terms. The intervening buildings, tree-lines, topography and the set-back location of the built area on the proposed site will obscure views of the proposed development.



Above – An image taken from the grounds of St Peters Church, Hanwell, looking south-south-east towards Park Farm. The proposed site is located beyond the trees which line Gullicote Lane on the right of the picture.

Users of Main Street, Hanwell

ES LVA Chapter 7 Clauses 7.201-7.206 describe the sensitivity of users of Main Street as **'Medium'**, the magnitude of change at year 1 **'Medium'** and the indirect, permanent, medium-term adverse effect will be **'Minor to Moderate'** with a **'Not Significant'** residual effect.

Given the primary mitigation planting, the 15 year prediction for magnitude of change will reduce to **'Very Low'** and the indirect, permanent, long-term adverse effect will be **'Negligible to Minor'**.

I would agree with this conclusion for EDP 4.

Photoviewpoint EDP 5: PRoW 239/7/10



Above – Photoviewpoint EDP 5 looking south along PRoW 239/7/10 towards Parcel B.

Photoviewpoint EDP 5 illustrates a worst-case scenario, without leaves in February, when the silhouetted roof-line of properties in Hanwell Fields is clearly visible along the entire southern boundary, albeit filtered by bare stems.



Above – An image taken from the same location as Photoviewpoint EDP 5 showing the impact of summer foliage on views and the visibility of Parcel B through gaps in the trees.

Photoviewpoint EPD 5 - Users of PRoW 239/7/10

ES LVA Chapter 7 Clauses 7.165-7.171 describe the sensitivity of users of PRoW 239/7/10 as **'High'**, the magnitude of change **'Medium'** and the indirect, permanent, long-term adverse effect will be **'Moderate'** with a **'Significant'** residual effect.

Clause 7.165 addresses the main issue in suggesting that the *'perceived separation between the northern edge of Banbury (just glimpsed beyond tree belt planting) and Hanwell will be maintained when viewed from the east and as such will prevent the appearance of coalescence between them despite the northward shift of Banbury's settlement edge'*.

Users of PRoW 239/7/10 will be exposed to views of the new development, particularly in winter, through the trees on Gullicote Lane resulting in a **'Significant'** residual effect. The visibility of the existing houses in Hanwell Fields, through the branches of winter trees, is evidence that the trees on Gullicote Lane will be similarly transparent giving views of the development from this footpath.

Photoviewpoint EDP 6: PRoW 239/8/20



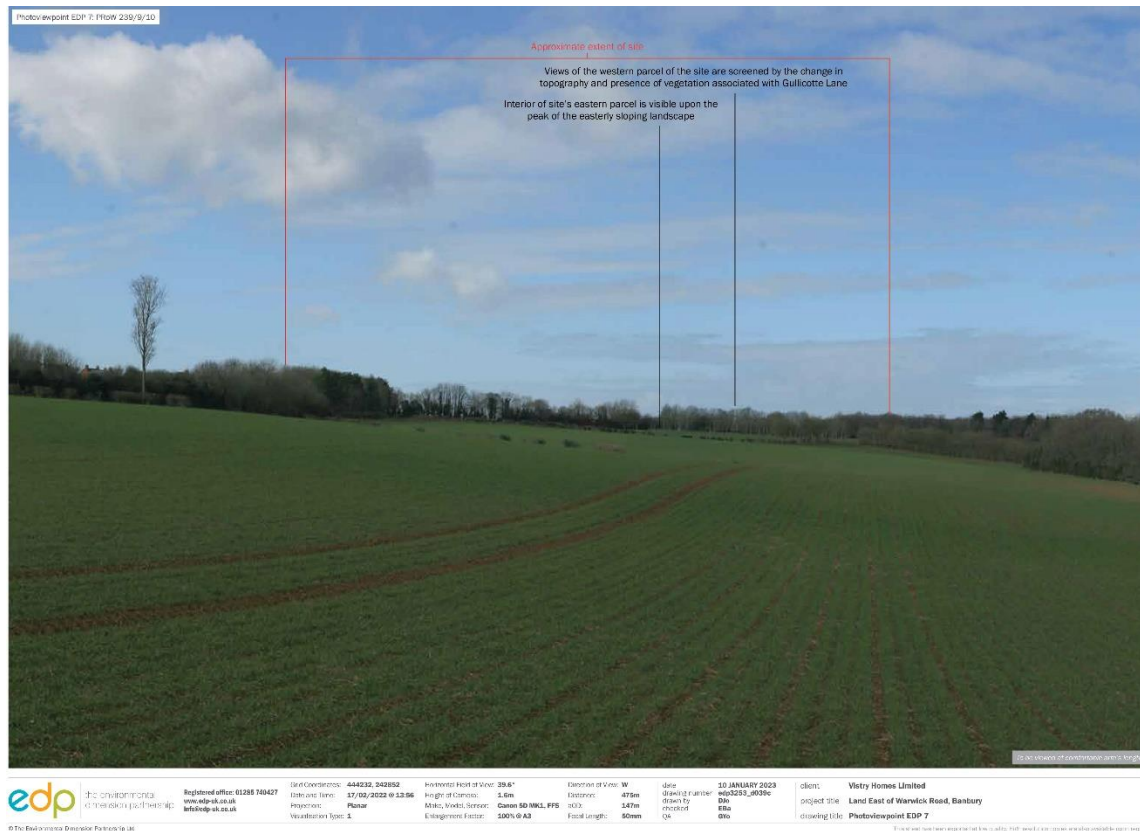
Above – Photoviewpoint EDP 6 looking south-west along PRoW 239/8/20 towards Parcel B.

Photoviewpoint EDP 6 also illustrates a worst-case scenario, without leaves in February, when the silhouetted roof-line of properties in Hanwell Fields is visible. Parcel B is visible in this view but Parcel A is concealed beyond the trees of Gullicote Lane on the right. The roof-line of proposed 2.5 storey houses set-back from the Parcel A boundary may be **just** visible in this worst-case view.

ES LVA Chapter 7 Clauses 7.172-7.179 describes the sensitivity of users of PRoW 239/8/20 as **‘High’**, the magnitude of change **‘Medium’** and the indirect, permanent, medium-term adverse effect will be **‘Moderate’** with a **‘Not Significant’** residual effect.

I agree with this conclusion for EDP 6.

Photoviewpoint EDP 7: PRoW 239/9/10



Above – Photoviewpoint EDP 7 looking west from PRoW 239/9/10 towards Parcel B.

Photoviewpoint EDP 7 also illustrates a worst-case scenario, without leaves in February, when the silhouetted roof-line of properties in Hanwell Fields is visible. Parcel B is visible in this view but Parcel A is concealed beyond the trees of Gullicote Lane on the right. The roof-line of proposed 2.5 storey houses set-back from the Parcel A boundary may be **just** visible in this worst-case view.

Users of PRoW 239/9/10

ES LVA Chapter 7 Clauses 7.186-7.193 describes the sensitivity of users of PRoW 239/9/10 as **'High'**, the magnitude of change **'Low'** and the indirect, permanent, medium-term adverse effect will be **'Minor to Moderate'** with a **'Not Significant'** residual effect.

I would agree with this conclusion for EDP 7.

Photoviewpoint EDP 8: Warwick Road (B4100) at the site's north-western corner



Above and Top – Photoviewpoint EDP 8: Warwick Road (B4100) at the site's north western corner.

The lower image above reveals the silhouette of properties in Hanwell Chase in these 'worst-case scenario' views taken in February. The lower image also emphasises the role that the enhanced screen hedge on the southern boundary of Parcel A has in defining the suburban edge of Banbury and also that, in topographical terms, Parcel A relates directly to the rural landscape context of Hanwell village.

The above two images represent the 'gap' that currently exists between the northern edge of Banbury and the south-western-most buildings in the village of Hanwell. The proposed development will be visible from this location and indeed all along this section of Warwick Road. The proposed boundary woodland copses will clearly mitigate the visual impact and the formally clipped hedge could be allowed to grow-out thereby obscuring views into the site and enhancing its role as a habitat for wild -birds.



Above and Right – A pair of images taken in July 2023 from the same location as Photoviewpoint EDP 8: Warwick Road (B4100) at the site's north western corner. The image above left shows the northern boundary hedgerow and associated mature trees and the image above right shows the western site boundary hedge and suggests its future impact on views into the site when allowed to grow out.

Photoviewpoint EDP 9: Warwick Road (B4100) junction with Main Street



Above— Photoviewpoint EDP 9 is annotated to emphasise the clear views of Parcel A's interior in this 'worst-case' view even with the northern boundary trees which, in February, only serve to filter the view.



Above – An image from the same location in July 2022 showing the impact of summer foliage.

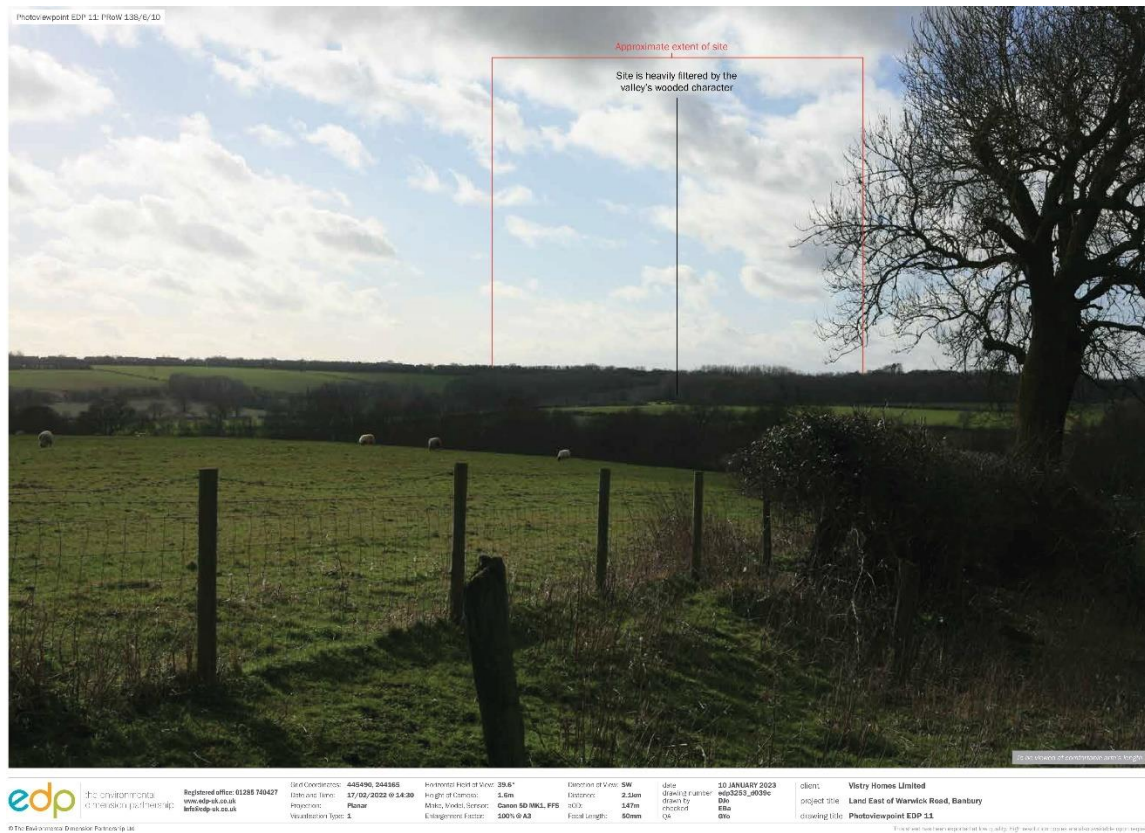
Users of Warwick Road (B4100)

ES LVA Chapter 7 Clauses 7.194-7.200 describes the sensitivity of users of Warwick Road as **'Medium'**, the magnitude of change **'High'** for the 600m stretch which passes the site but **'Very Low'** elsewhere. The indirect, permanent, medium-term adverse effect will be **'Moderate'** adjacent to the site and **'Negligible to Minor'** elsewhere with a **'Significant'** residual effect adjacent to the site and a **'Not Significant'** residual effect elsewhere.

I agree with this conclusion for EDP 9.



Photoviewpoint EDP 11: PRow Little Bourton

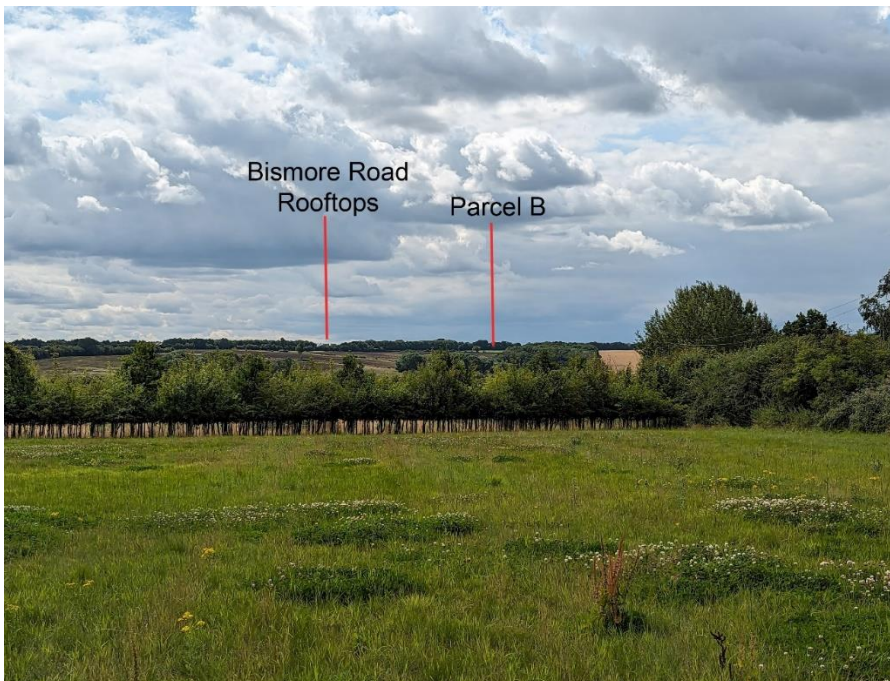


Above – This image taken from close to Little Bourton 2km north-east of the site shows that the site location is not currently definable by eye and that the proposed houses on Parcel A would not be visible even during the winter months.



Above – An image taken in July 2023 at 2km distance, from the public road north-east of Hanwell, south-west of Great Bourton, shows that the woodland around Hanwell village and the topography of the ridge-line obscure views of either Parcel A or B and would similarly hide buildings on Parcel A.

Photoviewpoint EDP 12: View from Banbury Cemetery



Photoviewpoint EDP 13: A423 near Hardwick Business Park



Above – This view, EDP 13, taken from the A423 Southam Road looking due west towards the site at a distance of 2km shows that visibility of the site declines as the road falls towards the town centre.



Above - the same view in July 2022. Summer foliage makes little difference at this range and elevation.

Proof of Evidence of Mark Cooper: Land East of Warwick Road, Banbury

Photoviewpoint EDP 14: Junction of A422 Stratford Road and PRoW 418/1/20



ES Appendix 7.1 clause 7.30 describes a negligible level of effect on road receptors due to their low sensitivity and the intervening topography and vegetation, both existing and proposed.

Photoviewpoint EDP 15: PRoW 418/1/20



ES Appendix 7.1 clause 7.24 describes a minor adverse level of effect on receptors walking along footpath PRoW 418/1/20 due to the intervening topography and vegetation, both existing and proposed.

Properties along the northern edge of Hanwell Fields



ES LVA Chapter 7 Clauses 7.207-7.212 describes the sensitivity of properties on the northern edge of Hanwell Fields as **'Very High'**, the magnitude of change **'Low'** and the indirect, permanent, medium-term adverse effect will be **'Moderate'** reducing to **'Minor to Moderate'** in 15 years with a **'Not Significant'** residual effect.

In my opinion the residents of Hanwell Fields believed they were buying a home on the edge of the settlement facing open countryside with rural walks and fresh-air. Everything about the northern edge of Hanwell Fields suggests that this is the intended limit of Banbury's extension; the built-form and orientation, the wide green margin and the boundary tree belt which is an historic feature some 50 years old*. I would argue that the magnitude of change to these residents is far from low and is actually fundamentally altering their position, setting and amenity.

*The original native hedge field boundary to which the additional Scots Pine and Beech trees were added is even older.

Residential Property of Park Farm

ES LVA Chapter 7 Clauses 7.213-7.219 describe the sensitivity of Park Farm as **'Very High'**, the magnitude of change at year 1 **'Low'** reducing to **'Very Low'** at Year 15 and the indirect, permanent, medium-term adverse effect will be **'Moderate'** reducing to **'Minor to Moderate'** in 15 years with a **'Not Significant'** residual effect.

There may be limited scope in GVLIA 3 for the particular circumstances which affect Park Farm, standing as it does in farmland with a parkland character, pleasantly nestled on the edge of picturesque village. The proposed development will permanently alter the perception and setting of this residence even if the new house aren't visible after 15 years.

Properties at the western extent of Hanwell

ES LVA Chapter 7 Clauses 7.220-7.226 describe the sensitivity of residences at the western extent of Hanwell as **'Very High'**, the magnitude of change at year 1 **'High'** and the indirect, permanent, medium-term adverse effect will be **'Major'** reducing to **'Moderate to Major'** in 15 years with a **'Significant'** residual effect.

If the magnitude of change for properties at the western extent of Hanwell is 'High' then how can it be 'Low' for Park Farm which is closer to the proposed development (see above). Clause 7.222 describes the maturation of the new woodland planting to create; *'a tree-lined settlement edge similar to that experienced at present, albeit closer in proximity'*. This is comparing the visual impression, to properties in the western end of Hanwell, of the existing mature tree screen on the southern edge of Parcel A to the future impression of the proposed boundary vegetation on the northern edge of Parcel A which is more than 200m closer and will not mature to a similar height and scale for 40 years.

8.0 Review Summary and Conclusion

8.1 In summary, Environmental Chapter 7 Landscape and Visual, offers a very thorough and methodical assessment of the likely significant environmental effects arising from the proposed scheme in relation to landscape character and visual amenity. It is based, correctly, on 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – 3rd Addition' published jointly by Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment. The LVA represents a good application of GLVIA-3; the guidelines remain the benchmark for landscape and visual assessment but they require diligence and experience to apply correctly.

8.2 The assessment is generally objective and uses professional judgement to assess the impacts which appear to be honest and without prejudice.

8.3 Having studied the LVA I have commented where I feel that the statements made slip into a subjective view or a level of impact with which I don't concur but I don't consider that this detracts from the rigour of the overall body of work.

8.4 The development proposals for the site have demonstrably been influenced by the LVA;

- Parcel B to be developed only for timber based play and landscape uses due to its visibility in the wider landscape and its proximity to the Hanwell CSA.
- Parcel B to be planted with new trees and woodland to soften views of Parcel A from the east.
- The placing of development zones on Parcel A to maintain existing boundary screening and provide space for extensive new woodland, parkland with trees and wildflower meadow including new woodland along the southern boundary and in the north-east corner.
- Warwick Road and Gullicote Lane boundaries to be reinforced to mitigate views of the site.
- PROW routes through the site to be respected and reinforced with new planting.

8.5 I consider that the 'gap' between the northern edge of Banbury and the south-western extremities of the village of Hanwell will be compromised by this proposed development to the point where there is no perceived distinction between the two. Parcel A will be permanently altered in landscape character to the detriment of the urban edge and the setting of the village of Hanwell. The visual impact of the development and the resultant change in landscape character will be significant in the short and long term on road users, PROW users and local residents.