

# GARAGE AT BROOKLANDS BARN, BODICOTE

## Landscape and Visual Appraisal



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Garage at Brooklands Barn  
Bodicote  
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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## General

- 1.1 RPS has been commissioned by Mr R Bratt to carry out a Landscape and Visual Appraisal of the proposed garage and associated hardstanding at the Brooklands Barn residential property at Bodicote near Banbury. (See Figure 1.1). The site falls within the administrative area of Cherwell District Council.
- 1.2 The application (ref: 19/01056/F) was refused, which the Council confirmed by written notice on 4 October 2019. In summary, the reasons for refusal which relate to landscape and visual matters are as follows:
- Siting, scale and design of the garage and hardstanding;
  - Change of use from agricultural to residential land;
  - Harm to visual amenity; and
  - Harm to a valued rural landscape.
- 1.3 This report provides a consideration of the site within the context of Brooklands Barn, which is currently under construction, the landscape of the Sor Brook valley and the settlement of Bodicote. It outlines the existing baseline conditions in terms of;
- topography;
  - vegetation cover and land uses;
  - published landscape and townscape character studies;
  - landscape, townscape and other relevant designations; and
  - the current visibility of the site.
- 1.4 The likely landscape and visual effects of the project are assessed against the existing baseline scenario. The construction phase of Brooklands Barn has reached a point where the maximum scale and mass of the building has been achieved and the majority of the surface treatments are in place. The assessment therefore concentrates on the current situation as a 'maximum design scenario' and does not assess a future baseline as it is considered that the baseline situation with the completed dwelling would not result in different assessment conclusions.
- 1.5 Planning policy of relevance to the application, insofar as it relates to landscape and townscape matters, is also considered in this document.

## Assessment Methodology

- 1.6 This assessment reviews the existing situation, and then considers the likely effects of the project in relation to the baseline conditions during the construction and operational phases. The level of the landscape, townscape and visual effects are assessed through consideration of the sensitivity or susceptibility of the receptor and the magnitude of change. The following table outlines the broad approach adopted to assess the level of effect, together with

professional judgement. The detailed methodology used for this assessment is set out at Appendix 1.

**Table 1: Level of Effect**

Landscape, Townscape and Visual Sensitivity or Susceptibility	Magnitude of Change			
	Large	Medium	Small	Negligible
High	Substantial	Major or Moderate	Moderate	Minor or Negligible
Medium	Major or Moderate	Moderate	Minor or Negligible	Negligible
Low	Moderate	Minor or Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

1.7 The effect of relevant aspects of the project on the landscape and townscape has been described and evaluated against the following criteria, defined as:

- Substantial adverse: Where the proposed changes cannot be mitigated; would be completely uncharacteristic and would substantially damage the integrity of a valued and important landscape or townscape.
- Major adverse: Where the proposed changes cannot be fully mitigated; would be uncharacteristic and would damage a valued aspect of the landscape or townscape.
- Moderate adverse: Where some elements of the proposed changes would be out of scale or uncharacteristic of an area.
- Minor adverse: Where the proposed changes would be at slight variance with the character of an area.
- Negligible adverse: Where the proposed changes would be barely discernible within the landscape/townscape.
- Neutral: Where the proposals would be in keeping with the character of the area and/or would maintain the existing quality or where on balance the proposals would maintain quality (e.g. where on balance the adverse effects of the proposals are off-set by beneficial effects).
- Negligible beneficial: Where the proposed changes would be barely discernible within the landscape/townscape.
- Minor beneficial: Where the proposed changes would reflect the existing character and would slightly improve the character and quality of the landscape or townscape.
- Moderate beneficial: Where the proposed changes would not only fit in well with the existing character of the surrounding landscape or townscape but, would improve the quality of the resource through the removal of detracting features.
- Major beneficial: Where the proposed changes would substantially improve character and quality through the removal of large-scale damage and dereliction and provision of far reaching enhancements.

- 1.8 The effect of relevant aspects of the project on views has been described and evaluated as follows:
- Substantial adverse: Where the proposed changes would form the dominant feature or, would be completely uncharacteristic and substantially change the scene in highly valued views.
  - Major adverse: Where the proposed changes would form a major part of the view, or would be uncharacteristic, and would alter valued views.
  - Moderate adverse: Where the proposed changes to views would be out of scale or uncharacteristic with the existing view.
  - Minor adverse: Where the proposed changes to views would be at slight variance with the existing view.
  - Negligible adverse: Where the proposed changes would be barely discernible within the existing view.
  - Neutral: Where the project would be imperceptible or would be in keeping with and would maintain the existing views or, where on balance, the proposals would maintain the quality of the views (which may include adverse effects of the proposals which are off-set by beneficial effects for the same receptor).
  - Negligible beneficial: Where the proposed changes would be barely discernible within the existing view.
  - Minor beneficial: Where the proposed changes to the existing view would be in keeping with and would improve the quality of the existing view.
  - Moderate beneficial: Where the proposed changes to the existing view would not only be in keeping with but, would greatly improve the quality of the scene through the removal of visually detracting features.
  - Major beneficial: Where the proposed changes to existing views would substantially improve the character and quality through the removal of large-scale damage and dereliction and provision of far reaching enhancements.
- 1.9 In the assessment those levels of effect indicated as being ‘substantial’ or ‘major’ may be regarded as significant effects. An accumulation of individual ‘moderate’ effects, for instance experienced during a journey, may also be regarded as significant.

## Relevant Guidance

- 1.10 As a matter of best practice, the assessment has been undertaken based on the relevant guidance on landscape and visual assessment. This includes:
- Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) ‘*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*’ (GLVIA) 3rd Edition.
  - The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2002) ‘*Landscape Character and Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland*’ (LCA).
  - Natural England (2014) ‘*An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment*’

## Study Area

- 1.11 The study area has been defined for the assessment based on a visual analysis undertaken during the site survey which has informed the identification of the zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) for the project, as defined in GLVIA3. The ZTV is the area from which any part of the proposed development is likely to be visible (See Figure 1.2).

## Baseline Methodology

- 1.12 A desk top review of published data, such as landscape character assessments, OS maps and aerial photography was carried out. This identified potential landscape, townscape and visual receptors that could be affected by the project. A field survey was carried out on 23rd October 2019 to confirm the initial findings of the desk top review and to inform the assessment of the likely effects on landscape, townscape and visual receptors.

## Assessment Criteria and Assignment of Significance

- 1.13 Landscape, townscape and visual effects have been determined, taking into account the receptor sensitivity and the predicted magnitude of the change arising from the project. Appendix 1 sets out the indicative criteria used to guide the assessment of significance. It should be emphasised that, while the criteria are set out to ensure that the methodology is robust and transparent, professional judgement has been used to determine the significance of each effect. The assessment has been undertaken by and reviewed by members of a team with relevant qualifications and extensive experience in preparing landscape and visual impact assessments. Professional affiliations include Licentiate and Chartered Members of the Landscape Institute, each with over 25 years' experience.
- 1.14 This assessment of visual effects is based on views from publicly accessible locations, and where effects on residential and other private views is noted this has, necessarily, been estimated based on the nearest publicly available viewpoint and professional judgement.
- 1.15 The viewpoints identified in this assessment are illustrative of the likely effect from a representative range of receptors, including occupiers of residential properties, users of rights of way and occupiers of vehicles.

## 2 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

### National Planning Policy

- 2.1 The Department for Communities and Local Government published the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) update in February 2019. The document sets out broad aims to achieve sustainable development in Section 2, including an environmental objective *'to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment'* at paragraph 8c.
- 2.2 Strategic policies regarding Plan-making at Section 3 include, at paragraph 20, the sufficient provision for *'conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure'*.
- 2.3 Section 5: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes states at paragraph 79 that development of isolated homes in the countryside should demonstrate that *'the design is of exceptional quality'* reflect *'the highest standards in architecture'* and *'would significantly enhance its immediate setting and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area'*.
- 2.4 Section 11 Making effective use of land requires *'safeguarding and improving the environment'* and delivering development that *'makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land'*. Paragraph 118d states that planning decisions should *'promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings'*. Paragraph 122 recognises the *'desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting... or of promoting regeneration and change'* and *'the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places'*.
- 2.5 Section 12: Achieving well-designed places. There are general policies about achieving high quality buildings and inclusive design for all development (Paragraph 127). This is to ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, establish a strong sense of place and create an attractive and comfortable place to live, work and visit. Proposals should optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development. Developments should respond to the local character and history and reflect the identity of the surrounding built environment and landscape setting whilst not discouraging appropriate innovative design. The development should create safe and accessible environments that are visually attractive with appropriate and effective landscaping. Paragraph 131 states that *'In determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings'*.
- 2.6 Section 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment. Paragraph 170 states that *'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by; protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality)'* and by *'recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside'* including the benefits of trees and woodland and *'remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate'*. Paragraph 172 states that *'Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to*



these issues'. Paragraph 180 requires that new development is appropriate to its location, ensuring relatively undisturbed areas retain tranquillity and amenity value, and that the impact of light pollution from artificial light is limited within intrinsically dark landscapes.

## Local Policy

### Cherwell District Local Plan 2011 to 2031

2.7 The proposed development falls within Cherwell District Council which adopted the Local Plan in July 2015. The policies that are considered to be relevant to this assessment are set out below;

#### Strategic Objectives for Building Sustainable Communities

##### Policy SO6

*'To accommodate new development so that it maintains or enhances the local identity of Cherwell's settlements and the functions they perform'.*

#### Strategic Objectives for Ensuring Sustainable Development

##### Policy SO12

*'To focus development in Cherwell's sustainable locations, making efficient and effective use of land, conserving and enhancing the countryside and landscape and the setting of its towns and villages'.*

##### Policy SO14

*'To create more sustainable communities by providing high quality locally distinctive and well designed environments which increase the attractiveness of Cherwell's towns and villages as places to live and work and which contribute to the well-being of residents'.*

##### Policy ESD 13: Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement

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

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

- *Cause undue visual intrusion into the open countryside;*
- *Cause undue harm to important natural landscape features and topography;*
- *Be inconsistent with local character;*

- *Impact on areas judged to have a high level of tranquillity;*
- *Harm the setting of settlements, buildings, structures or other landmark features, or*
- *Harm the historic value of the landscape.*

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

### **Policy ESD15: The Character of the Built and Historic Environment**

2.8 All new developments will be expected to meet high design standards and should:

- *'Contribute positively to an area's character and identity by creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness and respecting local topography and landscape features, including skylines, valley floors, significant trees, historic boundaries, landmarks, features or views in particular within designated landscapes, within the Cherwell Valley and within conservation areas and their setting;*
- *Limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation;*
- *Integrate and enhance green infrastructure and incorporate biodiversity enhancement features where possible. Well designed landscape schemes should be an integral part of development proposals to support improvements to biodiversity, the micro-climate, and air pollution and provide attractive places that improve people's health and vitality'.*

### **Cherwell District Local Plan 1996 saved policies**

2.9 The saved policy that is considered to be relevant to this assessment is set out below;

#### **Policy C28**

*'Control will be exercised over all new development, including conversions and extensions, to ensure that the standards of layout, design and external appearance, including the choice of external-finish materials, are sympathetic to the character of the urban or rural context of the development'.*

### **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

2.10 There are also a number of adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPGs) which include:

- **Countryside Design Summary, 1998:** This SPG provides an assessment of landscape character within Cherwell and advice *'to guide development in rural areas so that the distinctive character of the district's countryside and the settlements and buildings within it are maintained and enhanced'*. The SPG has been used to assess the landscape character baseline within this assessment.

## Summary of Planning Policy

- 2.11 The NPPF sets out overarching aims to ensure development is appropriately located, well designed and sustainable. In summary, the policies set out to improve the overall quality of an area, establish a strong sense of place and create an attractive and comfortable location, responding to the local character. National policies seek to conserve, protect and enhance valued landscapes and provide protection of scenic areas within nationally designated areas such as AONBs.
- 2.12 The Cherwell District Local Plan, saved policies and SPD incorporate strategies to conserve, reinforce and enhance (where possible) the important features, elements and characteristics of the rural landscape, the visual setting of settlements, avoid visually intrusive development and promote good quality design that contributes to an areas distinctive character.

## 3 BASELINE ENVIRONMENT

### Site Context

- 3.1 The appeal site is located within the parcel of land that contains the ongoing construction phase for Brooklands Barn within surrounding pasture farmland approximately 170 m to the south of the residential edge of Bodicote. (See Figure 1.1). The site lies within the base of the Sor Brook valley and is accessed by Church Street which leads directly south from Bodicote and connects to the cluster of buildings at Bloxham Grove to the south-west. The residential property at Bodicote Mill House lies adjacent to the Sor Brook approximately 180 m to the west of Brooklands Barn. Mature trees associated with the Sor Brook form a relatively dense belt of vegetation to the south and west. A cluster of buildings at Lower Grove Mill lie beside the Sor Brook approximately 360 m to the south-east. A rectangular reservoir surrounded by intermittent trees and shrubs lies to the north of Lower Grove Mill. The access track of Austin Road extends south from Bodicote to Lower Grove Mill. The track is lined by an avenue of young oak (*Quercus robur*) trees and lies approximately 220 m to the east of Brooklands Barn. An 'L' shaped belt of mature native woodland defines the settlement edge of Bodicote approximately 480 m to the east. More recently planted belts of native woodland subdivide the pasture fields to the north and north-east of the site.

### Landform and Drainage Features

- 3.2 The site lies at approximately 95 m AOD within the base of the Sor Brook valley, which extends east to west across the landscape. The land rises quite steeply to the north where Bodicote lies on a plateau of land at approximately 110 m AOD. The land rises steeply to the south to a ridge of high land at Bloxham Grove at approximately 115 m AOD.

### Land Use and Land Cover

- 3.3 The land within the vicinity of the appeal site comprises the active construction compound for Brooklands Barn within the wider land parcel defined by post and wire fences and hedgerows (See photo at Figure 3.2). The access track from Church Street and turning head are remnants of the previous developments which have existed on this land. An agricultural barn occupied the footprint of the new residential barn. Historically the parcel of land, as currently defined, has formed the location for a pumping station including underground water tanks constructed in the 1940's. The remains of concrete tanks and hardstanding form features within the site. Rough grassland occupies the majority of the remaining site area. A short avenue of sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) trees line the access road into the site. Several groups of maturing lime (*Tilia cordata*) and oak trees are located on the north and west sides of the land parcel. The land parcel has therefore not formed part of the open countryside/farmland for approximately 80 years.

### Public Rights of Way

- 3.4 There are no public rights of way within the appeal site. Several public rights of way cross the landscape of the study area (See Figure 1.2). A public byway 136/20 follows Church Street south of the site access gate to Bloxham Grove. A bridleway 137/4 follows Austin Road out of

Bodicote and leads up the hill to Bloxham Grove. Public footpath 137/6 crosses the pasture fields east of Austin Road and public footpath 137/8 crosses the field west of Church Street.

## Designations

- 3.5 The site and its immediate surroundings do not lie within a landscape designated area.

## Existing Landscape Character

### National Character Area Profile

- 3.6 The National Character Area profile published by Natural England (Natural England 2013) has been reviewed to develop an appreciation of the wider landscape, landscape character and context of the area, although due to its national context and the small scale of the proposed development, will not be relied upon as a basis to assess effects on landscape character within this assessment.
- 3.7 The site and the study area lie on the boundary between the Northamptonshire Uplands character area 95 and the Cotswolds character area 107. The Northamptonshire Uplands extend to the north, comprising a large character area which stretches from Banbury to the landscape bordering Market Harborough and Kettering. The Cotswolds extend to the south-west, comprising a large area of limestone hills stretching from the fringes of Banbury to Bath and the Mendip Hills.

### Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS)

- 3.8 The OWLS website forms an investigation into the landscape character and biodiversity of Oxfordshire. Landscape character types within the study area are as follows and are illustrated on Figure 3.1;

#### River Meadowlands Landscape Character Type

- 3.9 *'This is a linear riverine landscape with flat, well defined alluvial floodplain. It has pastoral character with meadows, wet and semi-improved pasture'.*
- 3.10 At a local level the site lies within the Sor Brook River Meadowlands Landscape Character Area (NU/12).
- 3.11 *'The valley bottom of the Sor Brook is characterised by small fields of permanent pasture, including wet and some semi-improved grassland, used for pony and sheep grazing. There are also a few arable fields. The fields are enclosed by intact hawthorn hedges and some scattered trees. The most prominent landscape feature is a continuous corridor of trees bordering the stream. It includes ash, willows and alder, with the willows being frequently pollarded'.*
- 3.12 Landscape Strategy: *'Conserve and enhance the tranquil, small-scale, intimate pastoral character and visual unity of the river corridors'.*

#### Upstanding Village Farmlands Landscape Character Type

- 3.13 *'This landscape type covers the elevated landscapes in the north of the county to the north and*

*south of Banbury. A hilly landscape with a strong pattern of hedgerows and nucleated villages characteristically built from local ironstone’.*

- 3.14 At a local level the study area lies within the Bloxham Upstanding Village Farmlands Landscape Character Area (NU/9)

### **Farmland Slopes and Valleys Landscape Character Type**

- 3.15 *‘This landscape type covers the steep valley sides of the Upper River Cherwell and its tributaries, the valley sides of the rivers Evenlode and Windrush and the Thames Valley to the south of Shiplake. A landscape type with prominent slopes within broader valleys. It is occupied by a mixed pattern of pasture and arable land. Long distance views across the valleys are characteristic’.*
- 3.16 At a local level the site lies adjacent to the Adderbury Farmed Slopes and Valleys Landscape Character Area (NU/15)
- 3.17 Landscape Strategy: *‘Conserve the intimate pastoral character of the small valleys and the rural, unspoilt character of the villages. Strengthen the field pattern where it is weak’.*

### **Cherwell Landscape Assessment**

- 3.18 In November 1995 Cobham Resource Consultants undertook a landscape appraisal of Cherwell District entitled “*Cherwell District Landscape Assessment*”. This study was commissioned by Cherwell District Council. This assessment has been superseded by the OWLS study described above.

### **Cherwell Countryside Design Summary Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)**

- 3.19 The SPG forms part of the development plan within Cherwell district and states that *‘The purpose of the Countryside Design Summary is to guide development in the rural areas so that the distinctive character of the district’s countryside and the settlements and buildings within it are maintained and enhanced’.*
- 3.20 The entire study area for the proposal is located within the ‘Ironstone Downs’ character area which extends to the north, west and south of Banbury. This is a strongly undulating landscape with steeply sided, narrow valleys containing small brooks. Mixed farmland is characteristic of the area, with hedgerows but few large areas of woodland.
- 3.21 Implications for new development include;
- *‘Trees and hedges should be retained to conserve the small-scale character of much of the landscape. Where new planting is required to help integrate new development into the landscape, this should reflect local landscape structure and character’.*
  - *‘All forms of development need to be sited with care in order to avoid locations where development would be either, prominent, visually intrusive, out of character or would harm a feature or site, which is important to the character of the area’.*
- 3.22 The settlement of Bodicote is recognised within the document as one of the larger villages in the ‘Ironstone Downs’ area and that 20th century development represents more than half of the

built form of these larger villages. The document identifies vernacular building style as ironstone with some limestone or brick and thatch or stone slate roofs. Windows are stone mullioned with timber casement or sash. Houses face the street and have ironstone boundary walls. The pre 19th century vernacular is defined as the preferred building style.

3.23 Implications for new development include;

- *'New development should respect the existing setting of each particular village'.*

## Townscape Character

3.24 There has been no specific assessment of the townscape character of the parts of the village of Bodicote which lie outside of the conservation area. The historic area of the village follows a linear arrangement along High Street and Church Street on the western side of the settlement. This comprises terraces of predominantly two storey Hornton stone houses.

3.25 The remainder of the village comprises predominantly late 20th century residential development of mixed one and two storey semi-detached and some detached properties with moderate sized gardens. The architecture and building materials are typical of many developments of this period which are common place throughout the country and have no specific local characteristics. The recently completed and ongoing residential schemes to the east, have extended this townscape character type, although are screened from the appeal site by the mature belt of woodland planting which defines the edge of the settlement. This development comprises mainly two-storey, with some three-storey, detached, semi-detached and terrace houses of Hornton stone or red brick construction and a central open space. The development mixes traditional materials with contemporary forms, reflecting the character of the historic core and the late 20th century districts of the village.

## The Changing Landscape

3.26 Having established the existing baseline character of the area, it should be noted that landscapes are dynamic and are subject to change. The landscape is always changing to accommodate new development. There is a need to accommodate change while maintaining and enhancing the quality of the landscape where possible. New development should respect the environment and its location by way of scale, design and landscape treatment.

## Landscape Value

3.27 As part of the baseline description of the study area the value of the landscape that would be affected has been established. The NPPF states at paragraph 170 states that *'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by; protecting and enhancing valued landscapes'*.

3.28 GLVIA3 defines value as *'the relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society, bearing in mind that a landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons. A review of existing landscape designations is usually the starting point to understanding landscape value, but the value attached to undesignated landscapes also needs to be carefully considered and individual elements of the landscape and individual elements of the landscape may also have value'*.

3.29 GLVIA3 includes a list of eight factors within Box 5.1 that have been used to identify

landscape/townscape value. These factors have been used to establish value.

### Landscape Quality

- 3.30 Landscape quality, or condition, measures the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements.
- 3.31 The historic hedgerow on Church Street, the more recently planted hedgerows and specimen trees and the grassland surrounding Brookland Barn and proposed location of the garage are typical features of the farmland in this area and have a medium value. The nearby woodland belts and mature tree groups are, in parts, of medium to medium/high value. The remnants of the previous pumping station and agricultural barn developments have an adverse influence over the character of the land parcel and have a low value in the context of the rural setting. Redevelopment at the site will incorporate high quality architectural treatments that provide an opportunity to enhance the quality of the land and reflect the qualities of the wider rural landscape.

### Scenic Quality

- 3.32 This measures the degree to which the landscape appeals primarily to the visual senses.
- 3.33 The Brooklands Barn construction site within a previously developed site currently have a low scenic value. When complete the barn with surrounding trees and grassland would have a medium scenic quality in the context of the study area. The surrounding landscape of the Sor Brook valley including the tree lined brook and woodland belts are prominent and attractive features in the landscape. The prominent urban edge of Bodicote, elevated above the site, has a slightly negative influence over the wider landscape, which has a medium/high scenic value.

### Rarity and Representativeness

- 3.34 Rarity is concerned with the presence of rare features and elements in the landscape or the presence of a rare character type and representativeness analyses the features or elements within the site and its surroundings which are considered particularly important examples, which are worthy of retention.
- 3.35 The trees and hedgerows of the site are typical features of the farmland and planted landscape at Cotefield Farm and cannot be defined as rare locally, although will be retained as a positive attribute within the development. The surrounding landscape of the Sor Brook valley is typical of this character area and has a medium value.

### Conservation Interests

- 3.36 This considers the presence of features of wildlife, earth science or archaeological or historical and cultural interest can add value to a landscape.
- 3.37 There are no ecological designations on the site and no archaeological or cultural heritage features of interest. The previous pumping station use at the site, including underground tanks, would preclude any value due to buried archaeology. The site therefore, has low value. The surrounding landscape of predominantly improved pasture fields have a medium/low value whilst the hedgerows, woodland and Sor Brook have a medium/high value.



### Recreational Value

- 3.38 This considers any evidence that the landscape is valued for recreational activity where experience of the landscape is important.
- 3.39 There is no public access to the proposal site therefore it has no recreational value. Public rights of way cross the surrounding farmland and provide a good level of access.

### Perceptual Aspects

- 3.40 A landscape may be valued for its perceptual qualities, notably wildness and/or tranquillity.
- 3.41 The previously developed nature of the site and ongoing construction activities for Brooklands Barn combine to create a location that is not wild. The surrounding farmland does not have wild qualities, although the tree lined Sor Brook has some wild and attractive features and would not be influenced by the proposals. The presence of the urban edge of Bodicote diminishes the perceptual value of the site and surrounding landscape in terms of tranquillity, which should not be elevated above medium.

### Associations

- 3.42 The historic core and conservation area of Bodicote is located on the western side of the settlement with no direct relationship with the appeal site or surrounding study area. Bodicote Mill House is a Grade II listed building, although is not intervisible with the appeal site.

### Summary of Landscape Value

- 3.43 The value of the landscape of the site is considered to be medium/low, whilst the value of the surrounding landscape is considered to range from medium/low to medium/high. The site and its surroundings are not designated for their landscape, ecological or heritage value. The elements of grassland, hedgerows and trees have value within the Sor Brook River Meadowlands character area although are not particularly important examples. The remnants of previous development including hardstanding, road access and underground tanks are not valued features. The site has no recreational value and is only partly visible from public areas. The site and immediate surroundings are not part of a wild or highly tranquil landscape due to a managed farmland location on the edge of Bodicote. Therefore, the features of the proposal site are not considered sufficient to elevate it to a level that is highly valued. The adjacent townscape of the urban fringe has a similar level of townscape value. The wider agricultural landscape of the Sor Brook valley offers some elements of medium/high landscape value.
- 3.44 The NPPF requires landscapes that are not statutorily designated to have attributes of a sufficiently high quality to qualify as ‘valued landscapes’, to ensure their protection and enhancement. The landscape of the appeal site does not have any special qualities. The contribution that the land parcel in which the appeal site lies makes to the wider countryside and rural landscape is limited, due to its current and previous land uses.

### Visual Baseline

- 3.45 A visual assessment has been conducted to verify the desk study findings and confirm the extent of visual influence of the proposal site. A site visit was conducted on 23rd October 2019

during cold and sunny weather.

- 3.46 Principal viewpoints, sensitive visual receptors and the approximate visibility of the land within the appeal site have been recorded from representative publicly accessible viewpoints. Photographs have been taken using a digital camera from the representative viewpoints as a record of the view and have been taken with a fixed 50mm lens on a 35mm digital camera in landscape format at eye level, approximately 1.6m above ground level from public viewpoints. No access to private properties was obtained, and where impact to residential and other private views is noted, this has necessarily been estimated by using the nearest possible publicly accessible location.

### Zone of Theoretical Visibility

- 3.47 The zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) for the existing site is the area from which any existing feature is visible. This extends over parts of several fields within the base and on the sides of the Sor Brook valley and the fringes of the residential edge of Bodicote. The ZTV is compact and contained by either landform, built development or woodland belts (See Figure 1.2).

### Visual Receptors

- 3.48 Thirteen specific public viewpoints have been identified as key locations which represent the majority of visual receptors within the study area. During the site visit photography has been undertaken at these locations to determine if there is potential for a view of the proposed garage. Eight locations were found to provide an opportunity for a very limited view of the proposed garage location. Five viewpoint locations were found to have either landform, built form or vegetation within the intervening view that would obscure views of the proposed garage or hardstanding. The eight locations where a view can be gained are described in detail below, whilst, for completeness and to support the conclusions within this report, the five further viewpoint locations are listed and included within figures and on the location plan. See Figure 1.2 and photographs at Figures 3.3 to 3.8.

### Viewpoint Descriptions

#### Viewpoint 1: Site entrance on Church Street and public byway 136/20

- 3.49 This is a near, glimpsed view from the byway on Church Street at the entrance to the parcel of land in which Brooklands Barn is located. Dense, mature native hedgerows and trees planted within the site screen most views into the site area. The property, which is under construction, is visible as a narrow glimpse through this entrance gateway. The location for the proposed garage is not visible in this view. In the winter when the hedgerow is not in leaf, heavily filtered views would be possible of the outline of the barn. At night, when complete, glimpses of light sources at the barn would be visible, mainly during winter. This is an intimate rural view.

#### Viewpoint 2: Public footpath 137/8 north of Bodicote Mill House

- 3.50 This is a near, open view from the footpath as it crosses the pasture field north-west of the site. The mature hedgerows on Church Street screen the site area but allow views of the roof of Brooklands Barn. Trees within the site break up the view of the building and the view beyond. Views extend into the distance to the valley side above the Sor Brook and fields on the edge of

Twyford. The overhead power line and timber poles form prominent verticals in the view. At night there would be minimal light sources, except for distant glimpses of Twyford. This is an expansive, rural view of farmland typical of the Ironstone Downs.

### **Viewpoint 3: Bridleway 137/4 on Austin Road on edge of Bodicote**

- 3.51 This is a near, open view from the bridleway on Austin Road as it emerges from the residential edge of Bodicote. The rolling landform sweeps down from the village across the Sor Brook valley and rises again towards Bloxham Grove. A series of sheep grazed pasture surrounded by hedgerows and woodland belts lie in the foreground and middle distance. The urban edge of Bodicote sits prominently on high ground to the right of the view. The edge comprises the rear gardens of residential properties, remnants of stone walls, hedgerows and occasional mature trees. The appeal site is tucked into this landform near the base of the valley. Mature trees within the site and the landform conceal the majority of the site area, including the location for the proposed garage. The construction of Brooklands Barn is visible on the edge of the site, framed by trees, which merge with the trees beyond extending up the hill at Bloxham Grove. At night light sources at properties on the edge of Bodicote, Brooklands Barn and Bloxham Grove would form minor additions to the generally dark landscape. This is an expansive, rural view of farmland on the edge of Bodicote, typical of the Sor Brook valley within the Ironstone Downs.

### **Viewpoint 4: Bridleway 137/4 on Austin Road east of site**

- 3.52 This is a near, open view from the bridleway on Austin Road directly east of the site. The newly planted hedgerow in the foreground will eventually grow up to screen this view. Pasture fields slope down from the edge of Bodicote to the right of the view, to the Sor Brook to the left. Brooklands Barn is visible within a cluster of trees at the site and a backdrop of trees along the Sor Brook and sits comfortably within the landscape. Arable farmland and a belt of trees rise up the landform at Bloxham Grove. The location for the proposed garage lies immediately to the right of the barn building, visible through a narrow gap in the trees. At night light sources at properties on the edge of Bodicote, Brooklands Barn and Bloxham Grove would form minor additions to the generally dark landscape. This is an expansive, rural view of farmland on the edge of Bodicote, typical of the Sor Brook valley within the Ironstone Downs.

### **Viewpoint 5: Public footpath 137/6 east of site**

- 3.53 This is a near, intermittent view from the footpath as it crosses open pastureland north-east of the site. The avenue of oak trees on Austin Road screen and frame glimpses of the landscape beyond. Fragments of the edge of Bodicote are visible to the right and Brooklands Barn in the centre of the view. The land rises to Bloxham Grove to the left. The location for the proposed garage lies immediately to the right of the barn building through a narrow gap in the trees. At night light sources at properties on the edge of Bodicote, Brooklands Barn and Bloxham Grove would form minor additions to the generally dark landscape. This is a rural view of farmland on the edge of Bodicote, typical of the Sor Brook valley within the Ironstone Downs.

### **Viewpoint 6: Public footpath 137/6 east of site**

- 3.54 This is a near open view from the footpath as it crosses pastureland east of the site. The avenue of oak trees on Austin Road partially screen views beyond but also frame glimpses of the edge of Bodicote to the right and the landscape beyond to the left. A narrow section of

Brooklands Barn is visible in the centre of the view. The tops of trees on higher land at Bloxham Grove are visible to the left. The location for the proposed garage lies immediately to the right of the barn building, visible through a narrow gap in the trees. At night light sources at properties on the edge of Bodicote, Brooklands Barn and Bloxham Grove would form minor additions to the generally dark landscape. This is a rural view of farmland on the edge of Bodicote, typical of the Sor Brook valley within the Ironstone Downs.

### **Viewpoint 7: Bridleway 136/11 above Lower Grove Mill**

- 3.55 This is a near, keyhole view from the bridleway as it climbs up the hill towards Bloxham Grove. The gap in the woodland along Sor Brook allows a single brief glimpse of Brooklands Barn across the horse paddock in the foreground. Glimpses of Bodicote on rising ground beyond are visible through gaps in the trees. The location for the proposed garage is visible immediately to the left of the barn. The overhead power line and timber poles form prominent verticals in the view. In the winter the village of Bodicote would be more visually prominent when trees are not in leaf. At night light sources at properties on the edge of Bodicote would form prominent additions to the generally dark landscape. Lighting at Brooklands Barn, when complete, would form a very minor addition to the view. This is a rural view of farmland on the edge of Bodicote, typical of the elevated areas of the Ironstone Downs.

### **Viewpoint 8: Wards Crescent Bodicote**

- 3.56 This is a near, panoramic view from an elevated location on the residential edge of Bodicote. The foreground pasture farmland slopes down to the base of the Sor Brook valley. A belt of relatively new native woodland planting crosses the field and screens the site and Brooklands Barn. Only the trees within the site are visible. The farmland on the valley floor and rising land at Bloxham Grove and towards the edge of Twyford form a rural backdrop to the view. In winter some glimpses of the roof of Brooklands Barn may be visible. Occupiers of properties on the edge of Bodicote would gain similar views from ground floor windows and gardens. People in upper floor windows would potentially gain views of the roof of Brooklands Barn, although the location of the proposed garage and hardstanding would remain screened. Ultimately the woodland belt will screen views of the barn and the landscape in the middle distance. At night there would be minimal light sources, except for distant glimpses of Twyford and development at Bloxham Grove. This is an expansive, rural view of farmland typical of the Ironstone Downs landscape.

### **Viewpoint 9: Bridleway 137/9 on the edge of Bodicote**

- 3.57 Foreground landform screens views of the proposed location of the garage and would screen the garage itself. Only the ridge of Brooklands Barn is visible.

### **Viewpoint 10: Bridleway 137/4 on Austin Road by reservoir**

- 3.58 Brooklands Barn screens views of the proposed location of the garage and would screen the garage itself.

### **Viewpoint 11: Public footpath 137/6 south-east of site**

- 3.59 Brooklands Barn screens views of the proposed location of the garage and would screen the

garage itself.

**Viewpoint 12: Public right 101/11 south-east of site**

3.60 Brooklands Barn screens views of the proposed location of the garage and would screen the garage itself.

**Viewpoint 13: Bridleway 136/11 at Bloxham Grove**

3.61 Trees and vegetation screen views of the proposed location of the garage and would screen the garage itself.

## 4 DESIGN PROPOSALS

### Scheme Description

- 4.1 The proposal comprises a five bay garage, hardstanding for four parked cars and manoeuvring space and an access drive to link to the existing driveway. The garage would have a double pitched roof with an overall ridge height of approximately 5.7 m. The garage would be 18.2 m long and 6.6 m wide with a footprint of approximately 129 m<sup>2</sup>. The building would be located approximately 9.8 m to the north-west of Brooklands Barn. The garage would be set into the sloping topography of the site to a depth of approximately 3 m on the rear of the building. The finished ground level would be just below the eaves of the building. A retaining wall would extend east from the side of the garage, continuing to the rear of the barn. The walls of the garage would be clad in black, vertical thermo ash timber and the roof would be clad in black corrugated sheeting to match the materials of Brooklands Barn.
- 4.2 The application ref: 16/01587/F for the conversion of the previous agricultural barn for residential use for Brooklands Barn was permitted by Cherwell District Council on 21 November 2016. With reference to the use of appropriate materials and design, the officer's report states at paragraph 8.18 *'The design approach taken for the proposed new building is of a contemporary nature with materials that look to reflect those in use within the village and typical of agricultural buildings that would be found in such edge of village locations'*. The report continues at paragraph 8.20 *'the types of finish and materials proposed to be used in construction of the dwelling are considered to be sympathetic to the rural edge of the village location. The timber louvre/cladding would reflect a somewhat rural/agricultural building albeit with a modern twist'*.
- 4.3 The proposed garage and hardstanding would represent an increase in the extent of residential curtilage previously permitted for Brooklands Barn.

### Appraisal of the Design

- 4.4 The proposals would retain the existing oak, lime and sweet chestnut trees within the site and the hedgerow to the west. Land within the site is well contained within the surrounding landscape context due to the landform which slopes away from Bodicote, the hedgerows and trees within the site and woodland and trees within the base of the Sor Brook valley and around parts of the edge of Bodicote. The surrounding footpaths, bridleways, byways and lanes provide the opportunity for views from limited locations to the west, north-west, north-east and east of the site. The close proximity of the larger building at Brooklands Barn to the proposed garage site would screen all views of the garage in views from the south-east. The location of the scheme adjacent to Brooklands Barn would form a typical ancillary building for a residential property. The relative size and scale of the five bay garage and hardstanding are considered to be appropriate for a dwelling that is the size and scale of Brooklands Barn. The garage would be considerably smaller than Brooklands Barn, emphasising the subsidiary nature of the development. The low level of the proposed garage and its location, cut into the sloping landform, would minimise the apparent scale of the new development, particularly from the north. The buildings would share a common external treatment and a simple form that was considered appropriate by Cherwell Council in their recommendation for approval of the barn conversion (application ref: 16/01587/F). The architectural treatment references and would

reflect agricultural buildings and farmstead clusters within the landscape of the Ironstone Downs. Set within a planted framework on previously developed land, the combined developments would minimise effects on the character of the landscape and visual amenity. The land parcel at Brooklands Barn would provide an appropriate context within which the new garage development would be perceived as an intensification of a newly established building cluster within a wider rural landscape.

- 4.5 The well-developed hedgerow boundary and specimen trees within the site, together with the barn itself would provide screening elements, behind which the new garage and hardstanding would be located. The existing vegetation together with recently planted woodland belts in the surrounding farmland would, in time, further screen development in heavily filtered views from the surrounding landscape and urban edge and merge the scheme into the landscape of the Sor Brook valley.

## 5 ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE, TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

### Assessment of Operational Effects

#### Landscape Effects

##### Local Landscape Character

- 5.1 The OWLS landscape assessment defines the landscape in which the site is located as the Sor Brook River Meadowlands Landscape Character Area.
- 5.2 Development of an area of rough grassland beside the Brooklands Barn, which is currently under construction, would result in the very minor loss of a feature of the previously developed land parcel in which the site is located. The land parcel is not characteristic of the pasture farmland of the surrounding rural countryside and the loss of this part of the site would not adversely influence the character of the Sor Brook valley. The low-level nature and small scale and mass of the building and its discrete location cut into the sloping landform would minimise any potential influence over land within the study area. The well contained parcel of land is not widely intervisible with the rural landscape or the fringes of Bodicote. The garage and hardstanding would be closely associated with Brooklands Barn, both physically and in terms of form and materials ensuring a successful relationship is established and an appropriate response to the character of the agricultural setting is provided. The pattern and grain of the landscape would not be changed.
- 5.3 The proposed garage would have a significantly smaller footprint and a lower roofline than Brooklands Barn. The area of hardstanding for parked cars, manoeuvring and the connecting driveway would have no influence over the surrounding landscape. Effects would be highly localised in a rural location which is well contained, is not designated and which lies within a parcel of land that does not have special qualities. The development would not result in significant harm to the value of the landscape of the Sor Brook River Meadowlands as there would be no loss of important landscape features, elements and characteristics and the proposals would have a barely perceptible influence over the surrounding landscape. The only change in character of the site would be a very slight intensification of built form that very closely reflects the character of Brooklands Barn. The magnitude of change would be negligible on a parcel of land of low sensitivity. The direct effect on the site area, which is uncharacteristic of the wider rural/agricultural landscape of the Sor Brook, would be Negligible adverse during the day. The well contained nature of the appeal site adjacent to Brooklands Barn, cut into the landform and within a landscape structure provided by hedgerows and trees, would limit the effects on the wider Sor Brook River Meadowlands character area. The wider character area has a medium sensitivity to a negligible magnitude of change leading to a Negligible adverse effect in the day, which is not significant.
- 5.4 The rural fringe site currently contains no lighting however, lighting at Brooklands Barn will be visible when occupied. The nearby residential property at Bodicote Mill House includes some light sources and residential developments at Bodicote include street lighting and light sources within properties and gardens which exert some influence over the site area at night.



Development of the site would not introduce any external lighting, in the context of Brooklands Barn, when complete. There would be no change to the night time character of the site or surrounding landscape.

The adjacent landscape character areas of 'Farmland Slopes and Valleys' and 'Upstanding Village Farmlands' have a medium sensitivity to change. The addition of a garage and associated hardstanding to the Brooklands Barn dwelling would have no more than a very limited influence over the nearby rural landscapes. In many locations there would be no influence over these landscapes due to the small scale, low key and well contained nature of the proposals. The negligible magnitude of change on these medium sensitivity landscapes would result in Negligible adverse effects during the day, which is not significant. There would be no night time effects.

## Summary of Operational Landscape Effects

- 5.5 The proposal would conserve the character of the Sor Brook Riverside Meadowlands and the Ironstone Downs through;
- The retention of trees and hedgerows within the site;
  - The use of an appropriate scale and design of development;
  - The careful siting of the proposals using landform, Brooklands Barn and vegetation to conceal development and minimise effects on landscape character; and
  - The avoidance of adverse influence over the setting of Bodicote.

## Visual Effects

### Viewpoint Descriptions

- 5.6 An assessment of the likely effect on views gained by groups of different receptors at the following eight viewpoint locations are described below. These viewpoints are all from publicly accessible locations where the scheme would be visible. See Figure 1.2 and photographs at Figures 3.3 to 3.9.

#### Viewpoint 1: Site entrance on Church Street and public byway 136/20

- 5.7 Views from the site entrance in the summer would not change following the development of the garage due to the screening provided by hedgerow vegetation. In the winter the outline of the garage would be barely perceptible, heavily filtered through the bare hedgerow and trees within the site. The larger outline of Brooklands Barn would be slightly more noticeable and the focus of the view. The new driveway and parking area would not be visible. People using the byway at Church Street would be receptors of high sensitivity to a negligible magnitude of change in the winter only. The level of effect would be Negligible during the day, which is not significant.

#### Viewpoint 2: Public footpath 137/8 north of Bodicote Mill House

- 5.8 A small section of the top of the ridgeline of the garage would be visible above the level of the hedgerow on Church Street. This very minor addition to the view would be visible against the side of Brooklands Barn, which forms a larger and more visible element within the view. There

would be a barely discernible intensification in the visible built form within the view. The new driveway and parking area would not be visible. The overall nature and character of this rural view would remain the same. Walkers using the footpath within the neighbouring field would be receptors of high sensitivity to a negligible magnitude of change resulting in a Negligible level of effect during the day, which is not significant.

### **Viewpoint 3: Bridleway 137/4 on Austin Road on edge of Bodicote**

- 5.9 Views from this bridleway in the summer would not change following the development of the garage due to the screening provided by trees within the site. In the winter the outline of the roof of the garage would be barely perceptible, heavily filtered through the bare branches of the trees. The new driveway and parking area would not be visible. Brooklands Barn would be more noticeable and the focus of this angle of the view. Equestrians and walkers using the bridleway at Austin Road would be receptors of high sensitivity to a negligible magnitude of change in the winter only. The level of effect would be Negligible during the day, which is not significant.

### **Viewpoint 4: Bridleway 137/4 on Austin Road east of site**

- 5.10 A narrow sliver of the top of the garage would be visible in the gap between the side of Brooklands Barn and the mature trees within the site. The two buildings would share the same black cladding materials providing a logical extension of an appropriate treatment in this location. There would be a barely discernible intensification in the visible built form within the view. The new driveway and parking area would not be visible. The overall nature and character of this rural view would remain the same. Equestrians and walkers using this bridleway would be receptors of high sensitivity to a negligible magnitude of change resulting in a Negligible level of effect during the day, which is not significant.

### **Viewpoint 5: Public footpath 137/6 east of site**

- 5.11 Views from this footpath in the summer would not change following the development of the garage due to the screening provided by trees within the site. A narrow sliver of the top of the garage would be visible in the gap between the side of Brooklands Barn and the mature trees within the site. The black cladding of the garage would reflect that used for Brooklands Barn providing an appropriate repetition of the same treatment. There would be a barely discernible intensification in the visible built form within the view. The new driveway and parking area would not be visible. The overall nature and character of this rural view would remain the same. Walkers using this bridleway would be receptors of high sensitivity to a negligible magnitude of change resulting in a Negligible level of effect during the day in the winter only, which is not significant.

### **Viewpoint 6: Public footpath 137/6 east of site**

- 5.12 A narrow sliver of the top of the garage would be visible in the gap between the side of Brooklands Barn and the mature trees within the site. There would be a barely discernible intensification in the visible built form within the view. The new driveway and parking area would not be visible. The overall nature and character of this rural view would remain the same. Walkers using this footpath would be receptors of high sensitivity to a negligible magnitude of change resulting in a Negligible level of effect during the day, which is not significant.

**Viewpoint 7: Bridleway 136/11 above Lower Grove Mill**

- 5.13 The gap in the intervening woodland on Sor Brook would enable a very narrow view of the garage to be gained from this location on rising ground above Lower Grove Mill. The new building would form a small extension to the side of Brooklands Barn. The two black clad buildings would read as a single form that would have a simple agricultural character in this context. The hardstanding in front of the garage would be barely perceptible at this distance. In winter the view would be less constrained by foliage on trees however, this would also open up views of the harsh urban edge of Bodicote immediately beyond. Equestrians and walkers using this bridleway would be receptors of high sensitivity to a negligible magnitude of change resulting in a Negligible level of effect during the day, which is not significant.

**Viewpoint 8: Wards Crescent Bodicote**

- 5.14 There would be no change in view for receptors in this location on the urban residential edge of Bodicote or for occupiers of ground floor rooms or gardens in neighbouring houses. Residents within upper floor windows of properties may be able to gain views of the top of the garage's ridgeline, through the intervening woodland planting and trees during the winter only. This change would be visible in the context of the more visible Brooklands Barn and may not be immediately identifiable. The new driveway and parking area would not be visible. Occupiers of upper floor rooms within residential properties are generally considered to be of medium sensitivity as these are not main living spaces. The magnitude of change would be negligible, leading to a Negligible level of effect, which is not significant.

**Viewpoints 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13**

- 5.15 There would be no view of the garage, driveway and parking area from these locations and therefore no effect on visual resources.

**Summary of Operational Visual Effects**

- 5.16 There would be no significant adverse effects on any visual receptors within the study area. The mature hedgerows and trees within the site, the location of the garage cut into the sloping land, the adjacent Brooklands Barn and the mature woodland planting within the surrounding landscape and edges of Bodicote would combine to provide high levels of visual containment in many views and would help to merge the scheme into the landscape of the Sor Brook valley. The small scale and low-key nature of the garage and the use of appropriate materials in the context of the neighbouring Brooklands Barn would limit the schemes visibility to several locations on surrounding public rights of way which cross the open farmland of the study area, from which only small parts of the garage or heavily filtered views through vegetation would generally be available. The new driveway and parking area would only be potentially visible from one location on elevated land to the south through a narrow gap in trees.
- 5.17 The level of effect would be no greater than Negligible adverse for any visual receptor. As the existing trees and woodland planting continue to mature to provide further screening the garage is likely to become completely screened from all locations.

## Assessment of Construction Effects

- 5.18 Construction activities associated with the proposed garage and hardstanding would include the following;
- Erection of protective fencing for hedgerows and trees;
  - Stripping and stockpiling of soil materials for reuse;
  - Excavation of landform to accommodate building;
  - Construction of garage;
  - Construction of car park spaces, hard standing and driveway;
  - Site offices; and
  - Soil regrading and seeding.

## Landscape and Townscape Effects

- 5.19 The construction site and activities for this garage development would result in localised direct effects on the fabric of the Sor Brook Riverside Meadowlands landscape character area and indirect effects on the neighbouring 'Farmland Slopes and Valleys' and 'Upstanding Village Farmlands' character areas. The activities within the landscape would temporarily form a discordant addition to a small part of the wider rural character area, although the small scale of the activities and their location adjacent to the much larger Brooklands Barn would not be completely uncharacteristic of the land parcel in this location. The activities would be well contained within the wider landscape context by the sloping landform, vegetation within and around the site and neighbouring Brooklands Barn. The levels of effect previously defined for the operational stage of the development would be the same for the construction phase. Whilst the nature of the construction site and activities is more discordant in the landscape than the completed scheme, this would be balanced by the short-term nature of effects.

## Visual Effects

- 5.20 No visual receptors would experience significant effects. Equestrians and walkers using public rights of way within the study area would gain very limited views of the construction site or activities as barely perceptible and temporary additions to the landscape, resulting in no more than Negligible adverse effects.

## 6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The proposed development would comprise a five bay garage with hardstanding for four parking spaces, manoeuvring area and driveway located adjacent to the residential property at Brooklands Barn. The location of the proposals within a site containing trees and hedgerows, set into the sloping landform and adjacent to the much larger dwelling offers the opportunity to restrict views of the development from within the study area and completely conceal the proposals from beyond the immediate study area within the Sor Brook valley. The garage would be positioned within the site to function appropriately for the residential property at Brooklands Barn, to make use of the nearby mature trees, hedgerows and building and the sloping landform which rises to the north. The architectural treatment reflects the simple form and cladding materials of Brooklands Barn. The two buildings seek to reference agricultural buildings, barns and farmsteads in the landscape and not typical residential buildings which are less common in the rural landscape. This design approach would help to minimise potential adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity within the study area.
- 6.2 The quality of the design and its relatively discrete nature would minimise adverse effects on local character. The appeal site lies within a previously developed parcel of land within a wider rural landscape and would not result in loss of agricultural land. In terms of NPPF paragraph 170 no value, through designation, has been placed on the land within the site or landscape of the surrounding study area, either nationally or locally. The appeal site has no special qualities and has no more than medium/low value within the context of the largely rural study area. The development would not result in significant harm to the value of the landscape of the Sor Brook River Meadowlands as there would be no loss of important landscape features, elements and characteristics including openness and there would be a barely perceptible influence over the surrounding landscape. The only change in character of the site would be a very slight intensification of built form that very closely reflects the character of Brooklands Barn. The location would be able to absorb a very limited development of this nature.
- 6.3 Due to the very minimal change in character of the site the effect would be Negligible, which would not be significant. The small scale of the proposals and the well contained nature of the site would also limit effects on the wider 'Farmland Slopes and Valleys' and 'Upstanding Village Farmlands' character areas to no more than Negligible adverse.
- 6.4 The assessment concludes that there would be some very limited visibility of the proposed garage from several public rights of way within the surrounding landscape and generally no views of the proposed hardstanding. There would be no significant adverse effects on any visual receptors within the study area. The level of effect on visual receptors throughout the study area would be no more than Negligible adverse. The proposed scheme would not result in significant harm to visual amenity within the study area.

## 7 REFERENCES

Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) '*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*' (GLVIA) 3rd Edition

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Cherwell District Council, *Countryside Design Summary Supplementary Planning Document*, 1998

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Cobham Resource Consultants, Cherwell District Council, *Cherwell District Landscape Assessment*, November 1995.

Natural England, *National Character Area profile* (2013)

## Appendix A

# Landscape, Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology

## Assessment Methodology

A1.1 The Landscape, townscape and visual impact assessment considers the potential effects of the development upon:

- Individual landscape or townscape features and elements
- Landscape and townscape character; and
- Visual amenity and the people who view the landscape or townscape.

### Distinction between Landscape and Visual Effects

A1.2 In accordance with the '*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition*' 2013 by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, landscape and visual effects have been assessed separately, although the procedure for assessing each of these is closely linked. A clear distinction has been drawn between landscape and visual effects as described below:

- Landscape effects relate to the effects of the project on the physical and other characteristics of the landscape and its resulting character and quality
- Visual effects relate to the effects on views experienced by visual receptors (e.g. residents, footpath users, tourists etc.) and on the visual amenity experienced by those people

### Duration of Landscape and Visual Effects

A1.3 The appraisal assesses the short-term effects of the construction phase and the permanent effects relating to the projects operational phase.

A1.4 Consideration has been given to the likely seasonal variations in the visibility of the development in a context including deciduous vegetation.

A1.5 Consideration has been given to changes in the level of effects likely to take place as new planting, proposed as part of the project, and existing planting matures.

### Landscape and Visual Assessment Process

A1.6 The assessment of the landscape or townscape effects of the project has followed a recognised process set out below:

- Identify the baseline landscape and townscape resource (e.g. individual elements and character) and its value
- Identify forces for change in the landscape of the surrounding area;
- Evaluate the sensitivity of the landscape and townscape resource and its susceptibility to change as a result of the type of development proposed;



- Identify potential landscape and townscape effects of the project through review of initial plans;
- Develop measures to avoid, reduce and ameliorate adverse effects and to maximise the positive benefits of the project;
- Identify scale or magnitude of likely impact of the project;
- Assess the level of effects of the project on the landscape and townscape, taking into account the designed in mitigation measures proposed; and
- Report the findings of the assessment.

A1.7 The assessment of visual effects follows a similar recognised process set out below:

- Identify potential visual receptors of the project (i.e. people who will have views of the development);
- Select an appropriate number of representative or sensitive viewpoints to be illustrated through photography and to reflect the full range of different views towards the project;
- Describe the nature of the baseline views towards the project for each representative viewpoint;
- Identify forces for change in the visual amenity of the surrounding area;
- Evaluate the sensitivity of the visual receptors and their susceptibility to change as a result of the project represented by the viewpoints;
- Identify potential visual effects of the project through review of initial plans;
- Develop measures to avoid, reduce and ameliorate adverse effects and to maximise the positive benefits of the project;
- Identify the scale or magnitude of the likely impact of the project;
- Assess the level of effects on the view from representative viewpoints, taking into account the visual context of the development and the measures proposed;
- Assess the level of effects on overall visual amenity; and
- Report the findings of the assessment.

A1.8 The assessment of representative viewpoints has been supplemented by scheduling of specific visual receptors to determine visual effects upon those likely to be affected to the greatest degree.

## Assessment Criteria

A1.9 The purpose of the assessment is to evaluate the magnitude of change to landscape, townscape and visual resources to enable the likely key effects of the project to be identified.

A1.10 Published guidance states that the level of effects is ascertained by professional judgement based on consideration of the intrinsic sensitivity of the baseline landscape, townscape or

visual receptor, the receptors susceptibility to the development and the magnitude of change as a result of the project.

### Value

- A1.11 Landscape value is defined in the glossary of the GLVIA (2013) at paragraph 5.44 as the “*the value of the Landscape Character Type or Areas that may be affected, based on review of any designations at both national and local levels, and, where there are no designations, judgements based on criteria that can be used to establish landscape value*” and “*the value of individual contributors to landscape character, especially the key characteristics, which may include elements of the landscape, particular landscape features, notable aesthetic, perceptual or experiential qualities, and combinations of these contributors.*”
- A1.12 The value of certain landscapes has been recognised, e.g. the national designations of National Park (NP). Some landscapes are locally designated, e.g. Special Landscape Area (SLA). The aspects/special qualities of the landscape that led to the designations have been noted, as has the degree to which that aspect is present in the particular area under consideration.
- A1.13 Other landscapes are undesignated, but valued locally for specific reasons or specific elements / features. The value of an area of landscape / townscape is expressed both through designation and also other criteria, such as tranquillity, remoteness, wildness, scenic beauty, cultural associations and conservation interests. These aspects have been summarised in the main assessment.
- A1.14 How that value might be affected by a development is classified on a four-point scale (low, medium, high and very high) as set out in Table 1 below. The table can only illustrate general categories, as the effects on an area or element of landscape / townscape is specific to the development proposed and that particular aspect affected.

**Table 1: Landscape/Townscape Value (expressed through designation)**

Value	Designation	Example
Very High	International/ National	Exceptional scenic quality (and/or special qualities), no or limited potential for substitution. E.g. World Heritage Site, National Park, AONB or key elements features within them well known to the wider public.
High	National/Regional / Local	Very attractive or attractive scenic quality, high or good landscape/townscape quality, limited potential for substitution. E.g. National Park, AONB, SLA or key elements within them
Medium	Regional/Local	Typical and commonplace or in part unusual scenic quality, ordinary landscape/townscape quality, potential for substitution, E.g. Locally designated (SLA) or undesignated, but value expressed through literature and cultural associations or through demonstrable use.
Low	Local	Dull, degraded or damaged scenic quality, poor landscape/townscape quality, can be readily substituted. E.g. Undesignated. Certain individual landscape/townscape elements or features may be worthy of conservation or landscape/townscape identified would benefit from restoration or enhancement.

### Condition

A1.15 The evaluation of condition is based on judgements about the physical state of the landscape or townscape resource. It reflects the state of repair of individual features and elements, as indicated by the categories within Table 2 below, or can be applied to the intactness of the resource as a whole outlined by the corresponding descriptions:

**Table 2: Landscape/Townscape Condition**

Condition	Example
Very Good	Strong structure; very attractive with distinct features worthy of conservation; strong sense of place; no detracting features.
Good	Recognisable structure; attractive with many features worthy of conservation; occasional detracting features.
Ordinary	Distinguishable structure; common place with limited distinctiveness and features worthy of conservation; some detracting features.
Poor	Weak structure; evidence of degradation; lacks distinctiveness and sense of place; frequent detracting features.
Very Poor	Damaged structure; evidence of severe disturbance or dereliction; no distinctiveness; detracting features dominate.

**Sensitivity of Receptor**

A1.16 The sensitivity of a landscape or townscape to change varies according to the nature of the existing resource and the nature of the proposed change. Considerations of value, integrity and capacity are all relevant when assessing sensitivity. For the purpose of this assessment, these terms are defined as follows:

- Value: the relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society. A landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons. Landscapes can be recognised through national, regional or local designation. Views tend not to be designated, but value can be recognised through a named location shown on a map, or through the creation of a parking lay-by or location of a bench to appreciate a view;
- Integrity: the degree to which the value has been retained, the condition and integrity of the landscape or the view; and
- Capacity: the ability of a landscape, townscape or view to accommodate the proposed change while retaining the essential characteristics which define it.

A1.17 Sensitivity is not readily graded in bands. However, in order to provide both consistency and transparency to the assessment process, Table 3 defines the criteria which have guided the judgement as to the sensitivity of the receptor and the susceptibility to change.

**Table 3: Sensitivity of Receptor**

	Landscape/Townscape Receptor	Visual Receptor
Low	Landscape/townscape value is low, With no designations; landscape/townscape integrity is low, with a poor condition and a degraded character with the presence of detractors such as dereliction; and the landscape/townscape has the Capacity to potentially accommodate significant change.	May include people at their place of work, or engaged in similar activities, whose attention may be focused on their work or activity and who may therefore be potentially less susceptible to changes in view. Occupiers of vehicles whose attention may be focused on the road.
Medium	Landscape/townscape value is recognised or designated locally; the landscape/townscape is relatively intact, with a distinctive character and few detractors; and is reasonably tolerant of change.	Viewers' attention may be focused on landscape, such as users of secondary or urban footpaths, and people engaged in outdoor sport or recreation. e.g. horse riding or golf. Occupiers of vehicles in scenic areas or on recognised tourist routes.

	Landscape/Townscape Receptor	Visual Receptor
High	<p>Landscape/ townscape value recognised by national designation. Sense of tranquility or remoteness specifically noted in Landscape Character Assessment. High sensitivity to disturbance specifically noted in Landscape Character Assessment.</p> <p>The qualities for which the landscape/townscape is valued are in a good condition, with a clearly apparent distinctive character and absence of detractors. This distinctive character is susceptible to relatively small changes.</p>	<p>Large number or high sensitivity of viewers assumed. Viewers' attention very likely to be focused on landscape.</p> <p>E.g. Residents experiencing views from dwellings; users of strategic recreational footpaths, rural footpaths and cycleways; people experiencing views from important landscape features of physical, cultural or historic interest, beauty spots and picnic areas.</p>

### Magnitude of Change

A1.18 The magnitude of change affecting landscape, townscape or visual receptors depends on the nature, scale and duration of the particular change within the landscape/townscape, the location of it and the overall effect on a particular view. This may be very small if the development is at some distance. In a landscape, the magnitude of change will depend on the loss or change in any important feature or characteristic or a change in backdrop to, or outlook from, a landscape/townscape that affects its character. The angle of view, duration of view, distance from the development, degree of contrast with the existing characteristics of the view, prominence of the development and the extent of visibility can all influence the magnitude of the change in view. In addition, the general visibility and combination of effects of elevation and topography on openness and degree of obstruction by trees and buildings affect the magnitude of change.

**Table 4: Magnitude of Change**

	Landscape/Townscape Impacts	Visual Impacts
Negligible	<p>The effect of change on the perception of the landscape/townscape, the physical features or the character is barely discernible or there is no change.</p>	<p>There is either no view or the character of the view will not be altered by the proposed development. The proposed development is at such a distance as to be barely perceptible, and may only be visible in clear conditions. May go unnoticed.</p>

	Landscape/Townscape Impacts	Visual Impacts
Small	<p>Changes to the physical landscape/townscape, its character and the Perception of the landscape/townscape are slight.</p> <p>Long distance to affected landscape/townscape with views toward the character area/type the key characteristic.</p>	<p>Visible, but not prominent. Minor component and no marked effect on view.</p>
Medium	<p>The proposed development forms a visible and recognisable feature in the landscape/townscape.</p> <p>Proposed development is within or adjacent to affected character area/type.</p> <p>Scale of development fits with existing features.</p>	<p>Prominent.</p> <p>Has an important, but not defining influence on view; is a key element in the view.</p>
Large	<p>Where there are substantial changes affecting the character of the landscape/townscape, or important elements through loss of existing features.</p> <p>Proposed development within or close to affected landscape/townscape.</p> <p>Scale, mass and form of development out of character with existing elements.</p>	<p>Dominant.</p> <p>Has a defining influence on view.</p>

A1.19 The following considerations are relevant when evaluating the magnitude of visual change:

- Distance: the distance between the receptor and the development. Generally, the greater the distance, the lower the magnitude of change;
- Extent: the extent of the proposal which is visible;
- Proportion: the arc of view occupied by the development in proportion to the overall field of view. A panoramic view, where the development takes up a small part of it, will generally be of lower magnitude than a narrow, focussed view, even if the arc of view occupied by the proposal is similar;
- Duration: the duration of the effect. An effect experienced in a single location over an extended period of time is likely to result in a higher magnitude of change than an effect which is of a short duration, such as a view from a road;
- Orientation: the angle of the view in relation to the main receptor orientation, where there is a dominant direction to the vista; and,

- Context: the elements, which in combination provide the setting and context to the proposal.

**Level of Effect**

A1.20 The level of the landscape, townscape and visual effects are assessed through consideration of the sensitivity or susceptibility of the receptor and the magnitude of change. The following table outlines the broad approach adopted to assess the level of effect, together with professional judgement. This may lead some effects falling between two categories.

**Table 5 – Level of Effect**

Landscape, Townscape and Visual Sensitivity or Susceptibility	Magnitude of Change			
	Large	Medium	Small	Negligible
High	Substantial	Major or Moderate	Moderate	Minor or Negligible
Medium	Major or Moderate	Moderate	Minor or Negligible	Negligible
Low	Moderate	Minor or Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

A1.21 The effect of relevant aspects of the project on the landscape and townscape has been described and evaluated against the following criteria, defined as:

- Substantial adverse: Where the proposed changes cannot be mitigated; would be completely uncharacteristic and would substantially damage the integrity of a valued and important landscape or townscape.
- Major adverse: Where the proposed changes cannot be fully mitigated; would be uncharacteristic and would damage a valued aspect of the landscape or townscape.
- Moderate adverse: Where some elements of the proposed changes would be out of scale or uncharacteristic of an area.
- Minor adverse: Where the proposed changes would be at slight variance with the character of an area.
- Negligible adverse: Where the proposed changes would be barely discernible within the landscape/townscape.
- Neutral: Where the proposals would be in keeping with the character of the area and/or would maintain the existing quality or where on balance the proposals would maintain quality (e.g. where on balance the adverse effects of the proposals are off set by beneficial effects).
- Negligible beneficial: Where the proposed changes would be barely discernible within the landscape/townscape.

- Minor beneficial: Where the proposed changes would reflect the existing character and would slightly improve the character and quality of the landscape or townscape.
- Moderate beneficial: Where the proposed changes would not only fit in well with the existing character of the surrounding landscape or townscape, but would improve the quality of the resource through the removal of detracting features.
- Major beneficial: Where the proposed changes would substantially improve character and quality through the removal of large-scale damage and dereliction and provision of far reaching enhancements.

A1.22 The effect of relevant aspects of the project on views has been described and evaluated as follows:

- Substantial adverse: Where the proposed changes would form the dominant feature, or would be completely uncharacteristic and substantially change the scene in highly valued views
- Major adverse: Where the proposed changes would form a major part of the view, or would be uncharacteristic, and would alter valued views.
- Moderate adverse: Where the proposed changes to views would be out of scale or uncharacteristic with the existing view.
- Minor adverse: Where the proposed changes to views would be at slight variance with the existing view.
- Negligible adverse: Where the proposed changes would be barely discernible within the existing view.
- Neutral: Where the project would be imperceptible or would be in keeping with and would maintain the existing views or, where on balance, the proposals would maintain the quality of the views (which may include adverse effects of the proposals which are off-set by beneficial effects for the same receptor).
- Negligible beneficial: Where the proposed changes would be barely discernible within the existing view.
- Minor beneficial: Where the proposed changes to the existing view would be in keeping with and would improve the quality of the existing view.
- Moderate beneficial: Where the proposed changes to the existing view would not only be in keeping with, but would greatly improve the quality of the scene through the removal of visually detracting features.
- Major beneficial: Where the proposed changes to existing views would substantially improve the character and quality through the removal of large-scale damage and dereliction and provision of far reaching enhancements.

A1.23 The level of effects is described as substantial, major, moderate, minor or negligible. Where negligible adverse and beneficial effects occur within the same view or same landscape/townscape, the effect can be described as neutral on balance. The level of effects



varies according to individual circumstances and the baseline situation, for example the presence of landscape designations and/or visual detractors.

- A1.24 A conclusion regarding the significance of each effect on a landscape, townscape or visual receptor needs to combine separate judgements about the sensitivity of receptors and magnitude of change as a result of the proposed development. The GLVIA (2013) states at paragraph 5.55 that a sequential approach can be taken to assessment of significance; *“susceptibility to change and value can be combined into an assessment of sensitivity for each receptor, and size/scale, geographical extent and duration and reversibility can be combined into an assessment of magnitude for each effect. Magnitude and sensitivity can then be combined to assess overall significance”*.
- A1.25 In the assessment those levels of effect indicated as being ‘substantial’ or ‘major’ may be regarded as significant effects. An accumulation of individual ‘moderate’ effects, for instance experienced as a sequence during a journey, may also be regarded as significant.

## Figures