

Land west of Hook Norton Road, Sibford Ferris

Summary Note on Landscape and Visual effects

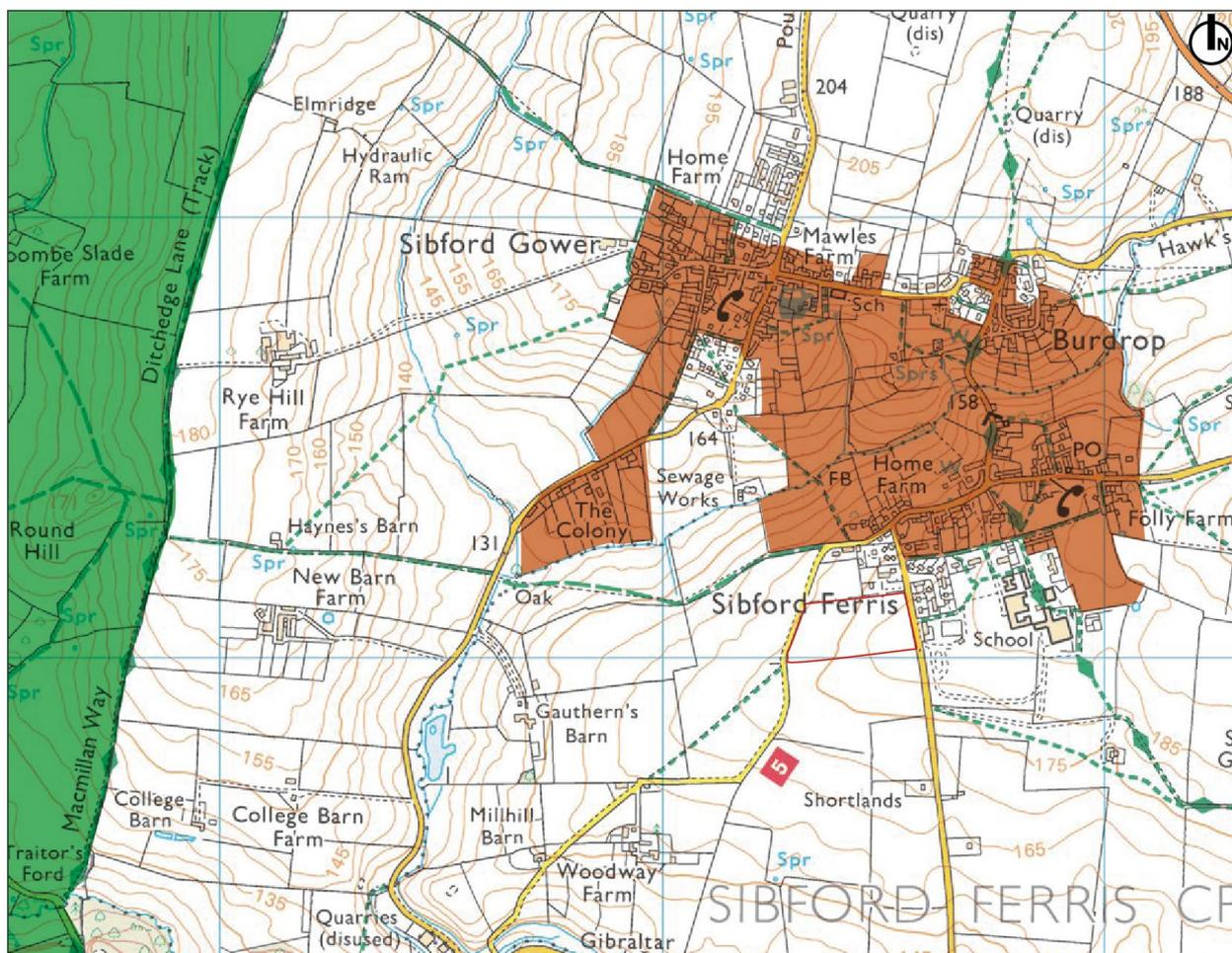
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Client: Gade Homes
Date: August 2021

Introduction and Planning Background

1. This note has been prepared in order to provide an update on the landscape and visual effects arising from the proposed residential development at Sibford Ferris as set out in the design proposals which will form a reserved matters application being made by the current applicants, Gade Homes. The development received outline planning permission, with all matters reserved, in November 2019 following a planning appeal (ref APP/C305/W/19/3229631 where permission was granted for up to 25 dwellings, associated open space and sustainable drainage.
2. The site comprises a broadly rectangular shaped area of approximately 3.7ha which forms the northern half of an agricultural field located to the south of Sibford Ferris. The village of Sibford Ferris is located approximately 10km to the southwest of Banbury and is situated to the eastern edge of the Cotswold in North Oxfordshire. The site is not covered by any landscape designations however it is approximately 1.5km from the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty boundary. Sibford Ferris, along with adjoining villages Sibford Gower with Burdrop are designated Conservation Areas within Cherwell District Council.
3. As part of the outline planning application, a landscape and visual appraisal LVA (ref 6426.LVA.002-August 2018) was prepared by Aspect Landscape Planning, the consultants appointed by the applicants at that time. A further note was prepared by Aspect Landscape Planning in January 2019 which addressed comments received from the Local Planning Authority Landscape Officer including consideration of 2 additional viewpoints.
4. A number of issues were addressed in the Inspector's appeal decision including the '*the effects on the character and appearance of the settlement of Sibford Ferris and the surrounding area*'. Within the Inspector's report (paragraphs 24-34) he considered the character of the surrounding area which forms part of the setting of the Cotswolds AONB as well as the potential visual impact of the development. Having considered the proposed scheme (para 29) as set out on the Parameters Plan, he concluded (paragraph 30) that that those from the AONB to the west and views from the south to be most sensitive.
5. Paragraph 29 describes the scheme proposals as per the '*indicative drawings*' which '*identify that development would be set in the north east corner of the site with housing of 2.5 storeys which steps down towards the middle of the site to 1.5 storeys. Within the appeal site the extent of development would be limited and when set against existing development at Margaret Lane House (part of the Sibford School), it would extend the village envelope by only a small area. The suggested height parameters are important in reducing the visual impacts of the scheme from surrounding receptor points*'.

6. At paragraph 31, the Inspector concludes, in reference to the AONB, that the 'integrity of the landscape would not be compromised' going on to state that the proposals 'would not have an 'urbanising effect' on the site. In paragraph 34 he concludes 'On this issue I conclude that the proposals would not cause unacceptable harm to the landscape setting of the Cotswolds AONB and the setting of Sibford Ferris'.
7. The note is based on a combination of site based assessment and a desktop review of the submission documents prepared as part of the outline planning application a review of current planning policy and guidance as well as the design proposals as illustrated in the application drawings to be submitted as part of the reserved matters application.
8. This note will draw on the LVA submitted as part of the outline application including reference to the viewpoints assessed within the LVA. It is not intended that this note be read as full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA/LVA), however it does draw on best practice guidance as set out in *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* (3rd edition); Landscape Institute/ Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013), also, referred to as GLVIA3. This note has been prepared by Vanessa Ross FLI, a Chartered Landscape Architects and Director at Arc, who has extensive experience in undertaking both landscape and visual impact assessments.



Site Location – (red line) with the edge of the Cotswolds AONB in green and the extent of local conservation area in brown.

The Scheme Proposals

9. The scheme proposals have been prepared to form the Reserved Matters application and to clear associated conditions as set out in the appeal decision. The proposals are for twenty five new homes with associated infrastructure and open space and have been developed in broad accordance with the principles set out on the approved parameters plan (ref 6426/ASP3/PP-Rev D and the Landscape Strategy plan (ref 6426/ASP4/SLP-RevA). The new homes will be located to the east of the site and the larger open space to the west and south, access will be created via a new junction with Hook Norton Road.
10. The scheme proposals have been developed to respond to the local architectural characteristics found within the village and surrounding area and also draw on the guidance set out within the Cherwell Residential Design SDP, July 2018. The proposals also address a number of constraints and detailed considerations that have arisen since the planning permission was granted. Such matters include the detailed proposals relating to drainage and services and the mitigation associated with the below ground archaeology that exists on site.
11. The new homes comprise a variety of house types and sizes, which range from larger detached houses to the west and south, two pairs of semi-detached houses and two smaller properties (combined with parking beneath) are located within the central area and south through to smaller homes in terraces of 3 and 4 houses front onto Hook Norton Road. In summary there is a lower density to the west and south, increasing to the north and east of the site.
12. The architectural style and use of materials draw on the local characteristics found within the village. The primary materials used within the scheme proposals are natural ironstone, render and slate roofing. The detached houses to the west (plots 16-19) and their associated garages will be finished with ironstone. The two pairs of semi-detached houses will combine both ironstone (plots 13-14) and off-white render and ironstone (plots 20-21); the respective garage buildings will include timber construction with a green coloured corrugated metal roof. The terraced housing (plots 3-12) fronting onto Hook Norton Road will comprise off-white rendered facades.
13. The three detached plots to the southeast, will be in ironstone (plots 23 and 24) and off-white render (plot 25), again garages will be constructed from timber with corrugated metal roofing. Plot 15 which sits centrally to the north of the site will be rendered in a soft pink colour and the remaining plots 1 and 2 (sitting above carparking) will be constructed from brick.
14. A single vehicular access will be created off Hook Norton Road, a single estate road with pavements on either one or both sides, will serve each of the properties. Parking for the larger properties is 'on-plot' located within garages or spaces within private drives. Parking for the terraced houses occurs to the rear within a combination of parking barns and external parking spaces. A spur off the internal residential street will serve a small area of ten parking spaces located within the open space to the west. These parking spaces are associated with the proposed allotment spaces (see below) and will be surfaced with 'grass-crete'. A sub-station will be located alongside the carpark.
15. The existing hedge along Hook Norton Road will be retained, however two short lengths will be removed to create the vehicular access and pedestrian access to the north. Elsewhere, existing vegetation to the northern and western boundaries will be retained with the proposed adjacent properties being designed to avoid impact on retained trees and vegetation beyond the site boundary.

16. Within the development properties boundaries comprise a combination of metal estate railing and hedgerows with ornamental planting to some front gardens. Climbers are proposed on some walls and a new native mix hedge is proposed along the garden boundaries of the properties that back on to the western open space.
17. Open space within the development is located within a central 'green' overlooked by the new houses and a large area of open space to the west and south of the proposed houses. The central 'green' has been designed to incorporate a toddlers play area with seating and a range of both formal and informal play equipment. The play space will be surrounded by a combination of hedges and trees which, once established will assist in providing shade for those using the space. An area of lawn is located to the south, with additional seating proposed.



Proposed Landscape Masterplan

18. The larger open space to the west and south, incorporates a range of features as required by the approved parameters plan (and the accompanying S106). There is a focus on enhancement of biodiversity through the use of predominantly native species planting as well as providing the benefits of community access to open space. The use of woodland planting is also intended to assist in integrating the proposed houses into the existing landscape context.
19. Much of the open space will be planted with a wildflower meadow mix which will be managed to ensure seasonal benefits are met. Mown paths will be included to provide access around the space. A bound gravel path is proposed to run across the space connecting the carpark with the south-western boundary allowing the potential to link up with the footpath network beyond. An area of 'inaccessible open space' (approximately 0.28ha) planted with trees, scrub and meadow, to promote biodiversity is proposed along

part of the southern boundary of the application site; this will be fenced off with timber post and rail fencing, with access for maintenance only.

20. The southern boundary of the site (currently unmarked) will be formed by the creation of a new native hedgerow with a small number of trees. To the west, along the existing hedgerow, an area of trees and scrub are proposed and further individual trees are proposed in small groups throughout the wider open space.
21. An area for allotments has been allocated along the western part of the southern boundary of the open space. The area (approximately 0.22ha), has been set out within the landscape proposals plans to demonstrate how eight full size allotments could be incorporated. These would be subject to localised terracing and include a small, grassed path around each. It is noted however, that at the time of preparing the application, negotiations are ongoing with the Parish Council as to the exact requirements for the allotment provision, and therefore whilst it is intended to fix the proposed location, the exact layout and form of the allotment areas may be subject to change.
22. A community orchard is proposed to the north of the open space, which will comprise a range of fruiting varieties (pears, apples etc) and a number of hazel trees to assist in providing shelter to the fruiting trees. Alongside this, an area of planting is identified for edible/foraging species.
23. The sustainable drainage proposals for the development incorporate a range of features from below ground soakaways, permeable paving and the creation of a storm water attenuation basin. The basin will be located within the western open space, however, to function efficiently, the location has moved east from that shown within the Parameters Plan (6426/ASP3/PP-Rev D) to bring it closer to the centre of the development. Tree and shrub planting around the edge of the basin is proposed along with species tolerant of the damp conditions, and occasional inundation, at the base with species selected to further promote bio-diversity.
24. Levels within the north-eastern housing area will, in areas be lowered compared to existing levels; topography of the western open space will remain largely unchanged.

Planning Policy – Summary of Relevant Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

25. Since the outline application was approved, the NPPF, which sets out national policy, has been updated with the most recent iteration being published on 20th July 2021. For the purposes of this note, a summary of the relevant parts of the NPPF are considered below.
26. At a national level the NPPF at para 8, sets out the three ‘overarching objectives’ which are required to achieve sustainable development, namely economic, social and environmental, with the latter two of particular relevance.
 - **a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and

- **an environmental objective** – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

27. Whilst the NPPF must be read as a whole, Paragraphs 126-136 provide guidance on ensuring the delivery of well-designed buildings and places, with paragraph 126 stating *“The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities”*. Paragraph 127 stresses the need for design policies should be *‘grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each areas defining characteristics’*.

28. Paragraphs 128 and 129 introduce the need for councils to provide clarity about design expectations early on and introduce the (new) requirement for councils to prepare *“design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code, and which reflect local character and design preferences. Design guides and codes. These provide a local framework for creating beautiful and distinctive places, with a consistent and high quality standard of design”*.

29. Paragraph 130 sets out 6 elements that: *“Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:*

- will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.*

30. Paragraph 130 goes on to state that *“Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents. Conversely, where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to development”*.

31. Section 15, (paragraphs 174-188) of the NPPF focuses on **conserving and enhancing the natural and local environment**. Paragraph 174 states that planning policies and decisions should do this by:

- protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*

- b. *recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*
- c. *maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;*
- d. *minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*
- e. *preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and*
- f. *remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.*

32.Paragraph 176 highlights that “*great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Boards and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty*”, noting that “*the scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited*” going on to add “*while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas*”.

33.As noted above, whilst the site does not fall within any designated landscape, it is within 1.5km of an AONB, visible from it (see below) and therefore forms part of the setting of the AONB.

34.Paragraphs 179-182 relate to Habitats and Biodiversity, including a requirement at part c) of paragraph 180 where it states “*c) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate improve biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.*”

35.Section 16 of the NPPF addresses the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment and at para 194, states the applicants should describe the significance of any heritage assets affected. This note does not consider heritage assets in any detail; however it is noted that much of the land associated with the settlements of Sibford Ferris, Sibford Gower and Burdrop fall within Conservation Areas.

Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031

36.At a local level the Adopted Cherwell Local Plan, sets out a wide range of policies that are relevant to the scheme proposals as considered by the Inspector in his report and continue to be a consideration with reference to the Reserved Matters application. Of specific relevance to this note is **Policy ESD 13: Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement** which states:

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

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

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

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

Summary of Landscape and Visual Effects

37. The following summary considers the effects of the proposed scheme first on landscape character and secondly from the nearby visual receptors. The outline submission LVA considered the effects of development based on the ‘Concept Schematic’ plan (ref 3371.101), this note considers the effects of the scheme proposals which include detailed architectural designs for the buildings and detailed landscape design for the open spaces. The scheme proposals, described above, follow a very similar layout and the area of housing does not extend beyond that shown in the outline approval.

38. As part of the detailed design a number of minor changes have been incorporated into the scheme proposals which have resulted in a slightly different configuration of the central green and the inclusion of a toddlers play area (the LAP was previously shown in the western open space) and a change in location of the SuDs attenuation basin. The architectural design has evolved to reference the built form found within the surrounding area with the scheme proposals now adopting a consistent storey height throughout with detail design incorporating slate roofing throughout and the use of natural stone on many of the buildings and the design of entrances, windows, boundaries etc. that respond to local styles.

Effects on Landscape Character

39. The site is located within the Oxfordshire Wildlife & Landscape Study the site is located within the ‘Rolling Valley Pastures’ landscape type, and within close proximity to the ‘Wooded Pasture Valleys & Slopes’ landscape type, located approximately 200m to the south. The Rolling Valley Pastures is described as

- *A strongly undulating landform of rounded hills and small valleys.*
- *Small to medium-sized fields with mixed land uses, but predominantly pasture.*
- *Densely scattered hedgerow trees.*
- *Well defined nucleated villages with little dispersal into the wider countryside.*

40. And it sets out guidelines for the landscape type including:

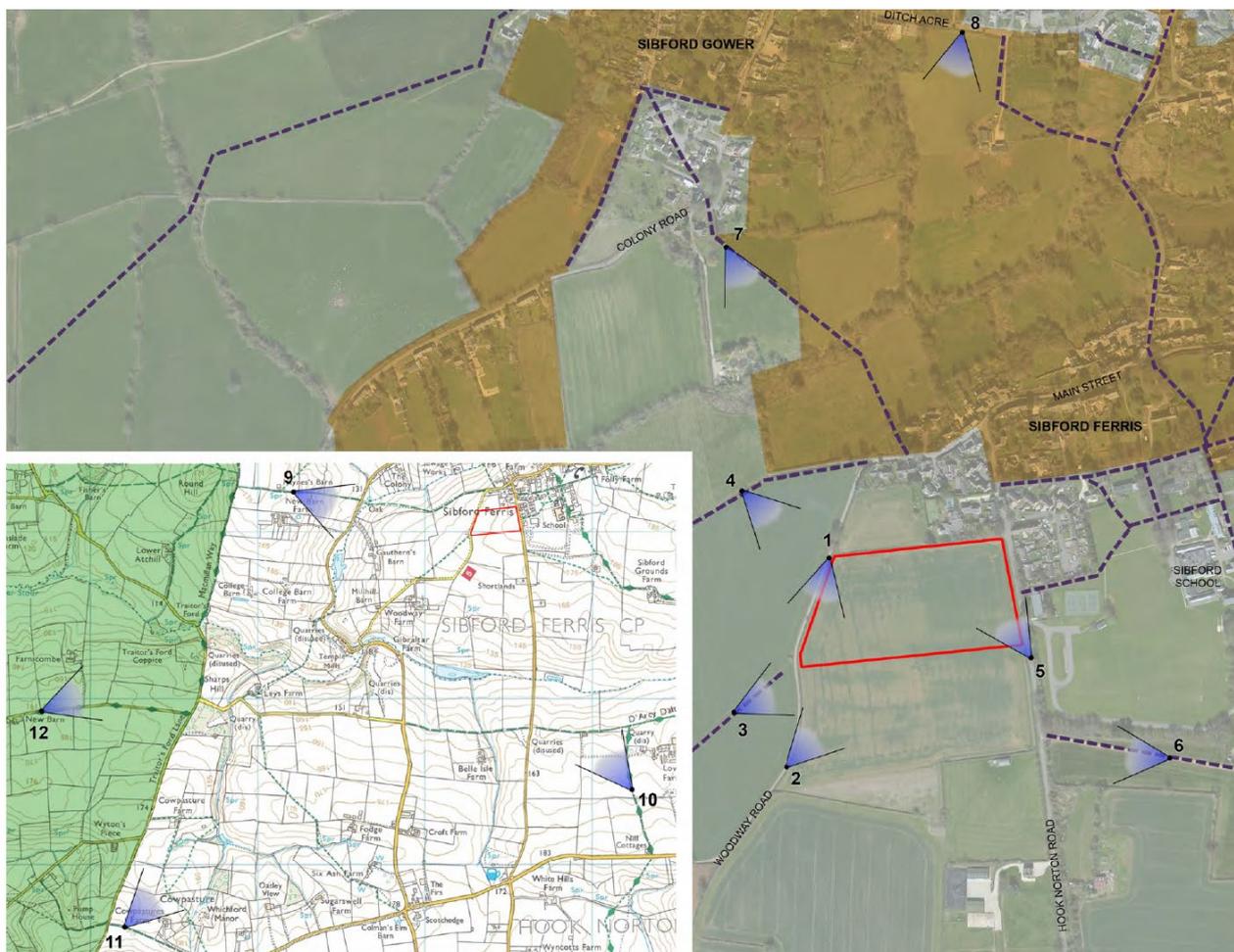
- *Strengthen the field pattern by planting up existing gappy hedges and replacing fences using locally characteristic species such as hawthorn and hedgerow trees such as oak and ash.*

- *Promote environmentally-sensitive maintenance of hedgerows, including coppicing and layering when necessary, to maintain a height and width appropriate to the landscape type.*
- *Contain the size of settlements and promote the use of building materials and a scale of development and that are appropriate to this landscape type.*
- *Promote small-scale planting of deciduous woodland blocks using locally characteristic species such as oak, ash and field maple.*

41. Within the baseline assessment, the Aspect LVA found the site to be of a 'Medium Landscape Value'. This is based on the land being in close proximity to built form at the edge of the village along with the proximity to the AONB and the fact that it forms part of the AONB setting.
42. In considering the effects of the proposed development and as noted within the Aspect LVA (para 4.2), the development would not introduce 'new or alien features that do not already exist in the localised receiving landscape context' and the proposed development would be immediately adjacent to the existing settlement edge. The scheme proposals remain in the location shown on the approved drawings and the landscape strategy has been developed to ensure that there is a strong landscape structures surrounding the new houses; this over time will greatly assist in assimilating the development into the surrounding landscape. The detailed design of the houses are such that they incorporate locally sourced materials and styles that are found within the village. The architectural design is considered to be of a high quality that will complement the village (including the Conservation Area) and in combination with the landscape proposals will create a positive edge to this part of the village.
43. In conclusion the proposed development will not result in any harm to the wider landscape character and the introduction of well-designed houses that will visually integrate into the existing village will in no way harm the setting of the AONB.

Effects on Views and Visual Amenity

44. As noted, the Aspect LVA considered 12 viewpoints from a variety of publicly accessible viewpoints, this was supplemented by two additional two viewpoints following a request from the local planning authority. The locations are shown on the extract on the following map. The Inspector, in his Appeal Decision report noted at paragraph 31 that two most sensitive locations were from the AONB to the west and views from the south.
45. As noted in the Aspect LVA and observed on site, the existing vegetation that exists in the vicinity of the site provides a strong sense of visual containment, particularly from the north and east. The nature of the topography of the varied rolling landscape results in the site being visible from a number of viewpoints that are further afield.
46. As part of the preparation of this note, a site visit was undertaken to review each of the viewpoints considered in the Aspect LVA. It is not intended to repeat each of the descriptions of the existing views as set out in the Aspect LVA, however the following table provides a summary of the views in respect of the nature of the visibility of the proposed development including the effects, over time, of the landscape scheme.



Extract from the Aspect LVA showing the viewpoint locations considered within the LVA and this note.

TABLE 1 – SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINTS	
Viewpoint	Description of change in view
1	View looking south-east from Woodway Road at the junction with the north-east corner of the site. The existing hedgerow will be retained which, along with the proposed planting beyond within the western open space is likely to screen views of the new houses from this location. In winter, it is possible that some roof tops may be glimpsed through / above the vegetation but this will reduce as the new vegetation establishes. There will be no perceptible change to the visual amenity from this location resulting from the proposed development.
2	View looking from Woodway Road to the south of the site. The existing vegetation will provide containment to the edge of the western part of the site, however the rear and upper floors of the buildings are likely to be visible in winter months. Due to varied roof-form and low density of the development there will be gaps between buildings and as planting grows both within the central green space and throughout the western open space, the views will be filtered by vegetation. Where visible the new built form will be seen in the context of the existing edge of the village which includes both built form and mature vegetation. There will be a limited change to the view which will reduce as new planting matures. The houses (including the materials) are of a form consistent with that found within the village and therefore there will be no harm to the view from this location, resulting from the proposed development.
3	View looking east from the path to the south-west of the site. The experience of the proposed development will be very similar to that of viewpoint 2, with any views of development reducing over time as new vegetation matures.

4	View looking south-east from the footpath to the northwest of the site. Existing vegetation around the site and within the village screens views of the existing site and whilst in winter months the roof tops of some of the new houses may be glimpsed, this change is not considered to result in any adverse effect on those using the footpath.
5	View looking towards the site along Hook Norton Road from just south of the site, through a gap in the hedgerow. The proposed development will become visible from this location as part of a kinetic view when passing the gap in the hedgerow. Some houses within the new development will become visible, however as they are of high quality design and due to the varied levels, variation to the built form and set back from the southern boundary, they will not in themselves harm the visual amenity and over time, proposed tree and hedgerow vegetation along the southern part of the site will mature which will contain views into the development, thereby reducing the visual impact.
6	From this footpath, to the south-east of the site, existing vegetation screens views into the site. In winter it may be possible to detect built form through the vegetation but the development will remain largely imperceptible in the view.
7	The view from public right of way to south of Sibford Gower is across the intervening valley with the site forming part of the horizon from this location. The existing vegetation to the north of the site will screen much of the proposed development and whilst it is anticipated that some of the new houses will become visible in part of the view they will be filtered by existing vegetation along the western periphery of the site; this filtering will increase over time as proposed trees and other vegetation matures. Where visible any new houses visible in the view will be experienced in a similar way to those currently visible from this location within the village.
8	Views across intervening fields from Ditch Acre to the north of the village are largely screened by intervening vegetation. It is possible that some new houses may become visible in winter months, but these will be largely imperceptible in the views and cause no adverse impacts on the visual amenity.
9	In views looking east from the bridleway the site forms part of a wide panoramic view. Part of the proposed development will become visible, though much of it will be screened by existing vegetation. Over time views will become increasingly filtered through proposed planting. The new houses that will be visible will be seen in the context of the existing cluster of buildings within the village and due to the materials, varied roof patterns and low density, the effects will be limited; the existing mature vegetation to the east of the site will remain the focus of the horizon and will not result in any harm to the visual amenity from this location.
10 -	The view looking northwest from public right of way is across a wide panorama with belts of existing vegetation blocking views to the site. It is anticipated that in winter months roof tops of some of the new houses may become visible however they will remain largely imperceptible and will not harm the views from this location.
11 -	This view, approximately 2km to the south west, close to the AONB, is across the intervening landscape towards the wooded ridge along the horizon. The villages of Sibford Ferris and Sibford Gower are visible as part of the view. The proposed development is likely to become visible from this location, however, will be seen alongside existing built form and will not break the horizon formed by the existing mature vegetation. Over time the houses will become filtered by the proposed vegetation and it is not considered the additional built form will in any way harm the visual amenity from this location.
12-	This view is from within the AONB and again the views are out across the rolling landscape towards the wooded ridge forming the horizon. Existing settlement including the village of Sibford Ferris and the buildings of Sibford School are seen within the wooded context of the view. The proposed houses will become visible in a small part of the view, though over time will be partially screened by proposed vegetation. The roof tops will not break the skyline and the existing trees will remain the focus of the horizon. Notwithstanding the sensitive location within the AONB, the views out will not be harmed as a result of the introduction of new houses into the view.
Additional views – 13-14	Two views were considered looking directly west from the public right of way alongside Margaret Fell House. Whilst seen in the context of the building, the site is visible and the new development will to some degree restrict views out across to distant views beyond. Whilst the proposed development as approved, will introduce built form into the foreground of the view, it is likely that due to the low density and spaces between buildings that some glimpsed views along the access road and between buildings will still exist. Whilst the view will change the proposed houses are of high quality architectural design and therefore in themselves will be attractive features from this location.

Summary and Conclusion

47. In summary the proposed development for 25 houses and an area of open space to the west is broadly in line with the scheme which received planning permission, following an appeal, in 2019. Whilst the extent of the area of new housing remains the same, the scheme has evolved to develop both the detailed design of the architecture and landscape proposals which have resulted in some adjustments to the approved scheme both in layout and architecture.
48. The Inspector found there to be no harm resulting from the outline application on either landscape or visual amenity or in the setting of the AONB. In reviewing the current detailed proposals in respect of any changes to the visual or landscape effects, it is concluded that there would be no change in the effects as assessed by the Aspect LVA which was submitted with the outline application, in that the proposed development would not result in any harm to the receiving landscape character. As the designs have evolved, it is now considered that as a result of the architectural design which is sensitive to the existing context in respect of form, scale, material and detailing along with the comprehensive landscape proposals for the wider site, that the scheme proposals will complement the existing village and in no way detract from the setting of the village or the AONB.
49. In respect of visual amenity, a similar conclusion is drawn. Where new houses are visible, including from locations identified by the Inspector as being most sensitive, they will be seen in the context of existing built form and existing mature vegetation. The design of the layout is such that the existing ground levels will be lowered, which in combination with the low density of housing to the periphery of the site as well as the orientation of the roof pitches etc, will all combine to reduce the visual impact.
50. Overtime visibility will be further reduced as planting proposed within the housing area and open spaces, mature. As the vegetation matures views towards the development will become similar to those looking towards existing clusters of buildings which are seen through or nestled within vegetation. In views from close proximity, the houses will be prominent features however they are designed to a high standard, using locally appropriate materials and detailing which will result in an attractive extension to the village.
51. In overall conclusion it is considered that there will be no adverse effects resulting from the design proposals and that as a result of the high quality design being proposed, that the resultant development will make a positive contribution to creating a new southern edge to the village.