

1. Introduction

The Original LVIA

- 1.1. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment ('the original LVIA') was submitted in 2021 as part of Outline Planning Application 21/03522/OUT, relating to Land Adjoining and West of Rutten Lane, Yarnton.
- 1.2. This Addendum LVIA should be read alongside the original LVIA and its Appendices, the figures and photographs provided in the document and the updated Design and Access Statement, December 2022, and particularly Section 4 (Green Belt Assessment & Landscape Proposals), Section 5 (Architectural Design Principles) and Section 6 (Relationship with the PR9 Development Brief).
- 1.3. The landscape receptors scoped into the original LVIA were:
 - National Character Area 108: Upper Thames Clay Vales ('NCA 108');
 - Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study ('OWLS') Wooded Estatelands;
 - Landscape Site Resource (which included consideration of hedgerow and native trees);
 - Designated Green Belt, as shown in Cherwell District Council's development plan.
- 1.4. The visual receptors scoped into the original LVIA were:
 - Public Right of Way ('PRoW') west of the Site (Group 1);
 - PRoW within the Site (Group 2);
 - PRoW to the north (Group 3);
 - Users of A44 to the east (Group 4);
 - Users of Rutten Lane to the east of the Site (Group 5);
 - PRoW to the east of A44 (Group 6);
 - Long range views experienced from PRoW north of the site (Group 7);
 - Long range views experienced from PRoW to the south of the site (Group 8); and,
 - Views from Frogwelldown Lane (Group 9).
- 1.5. The views experienced by these receptors were represented in the original LVIA by 17 viewpoints.
- 1.6. The LVIA concluded that the Proposed Development would have some short-term negative landscape and visual effects, but that these either reduce or become beneficial effects once the proposed landscape mitigation (such as woodland planting) becomes established. After 15 years, the only receptor subject to a residual, long term adverse effect (moderate adverse) is Visual Receptor Group 2 which is located within the Proposed Development and will be close to the proposed built form, which means visual change from the Proposed Development is unavoidable.
- 1.7. The limited long-term adverse effects and the beneficial effects on landscape and visual receptors were judged to be a result of a carefully designed landscape mitigation strategy and a generous approach to Green Infrastructure, whereby the majority of the site area (70%) is undeveloped and positively promoted as green space and mitigation, whether grassland, meadow, wetland or woodland.

LVIA Consultation and Feedback

1.8. Following submission of the Outline Planning Application documentation, including the original LVIA, feedback was received by email on 8th November 2021 from Cherwell District Council's Landscape Officer. The following points were raised that are relevant to the LVIA:

a) It was requested that Dolton Lane Bridleway should also be considered as a landscape receptor, as follows:

'Dolton Lane bridle way with its mature hedgerows is deemed to be such an important feature that it merits landscape receptor status within the LVIA, judging its sensitivity and the impacts of the development. It also justifies its importance within the scheme of things. It would be my wish to see its current character protected as part of the scheme with no metalled surface and no lighting. The route only sided up for horse riding. A parallel cycling and walking route is preferred. I note from the D&A that there is a safe school walking route parallel to Dolton Lane Bridleway which I support.'

1.9. At Chapter 2 below, we provide the requested information on the sensitivity, magnitude of change and overall effect of the Proposed Development on Dolton Lane as a landscape receptor.

b) It was requested that Begbroke Ancient Woodland is scoped into the LVIA as a receptor, as follows:

'The Begbroke Ancient Woodland is also a very important landscape receptor. The aforementioned receptors should be included in the Residual Effects chapter and not just considered under the generalist term Site Landscape Resource.'

1.10. At Chapter 2 below, we also provide the requested information on the sensitivity, magnitude of change and overall effect, of the proposed development on Begbroke Ancient Woodland.

c) It was requested that further details are provided of how the LVIA analysis has directly influenced the masterplan. It was suggested that this is provided as annotated plans. This detail is provided in Chapter 3 and within Figure 12 of this addendum.

Alterations to the Parameter Plans since original submission

1.11. Since submission of the Outline Planning Application, the following changes have been made to the proposed layout and associated parameter plans, with those of most relevance to landscape and visual highlighted in bold:

- Design changes to reflect comments made by the CDC case officer (Linda Griffiths):
 - Inclusion of Character Analysis;
 - Changes to illustrative material to reflect local character;
 - Revision from single storey carports generally to two storey built form with parking under-crofts;
 - Further justification to meadowland / woodland.
- Design changes to reflect comments made by Frances Evans (Housing Officer):
 - AH clusters generally do not exceed 15 units;
 - Revised private/affordable housing mix.
- Updates to the overall layout of the scheme which have improved legibility, simplified unit frontages and garden frontages / backings

- **Amendments to SuDS proposals in the centre of the site. To accommodate the proposed change, the public open space at the centre of the site has been enlarged;**
- **To accommodate this larger area of public open space, the most westerly built form within the masterplan has been moved approximately 5 metres further west**
- **In line with the principles of the parameter plans as originally submitted, the layout of infrastructure has been modified to continue avoiding the removal of existing vegetation. No additional trees have to be removed to facilitate the proposals described by the revised parameter plans**
- **The maximum height parameter of a development block fronting towards Rutten Lane has been reduced to up to 3 storeys (12.5m to ridge line) to reduce the potential impact on houses to the east.**
- Details of the Community Hub have been developed further;
- The proposed second point of access to Yarnton Residential and Nursing Home has been removed. The route through the development now provides access to the school playing fields expansion area;
- A minor boundary change to the school playing fields to simplify access arrangements and provide more visible new entrance gate and to allow for potential greater flexibility of use;
- Updates to plans to show Footpath (FP 124/9/10) in its correct location;
- An area of land now shown to be safeguarded for future expansion of Yarnton Medical Practice with access to the Medical Practice amended to suit its operational requirements;
- Completion of VISSIM modelling.

2. Assessment of Landscape and Visual Effects

Receptors in the original LVIA

2.1. Having reviewed the updated parameter plans and the amendments set out above alongside the previous judgements of magnitude of change and overall effect, it is judged that the level of change and overall effect experienced by receptors set out in the original LVIA would not change. No alterations are therefore made to the LVIA on the basis of the amendments set out above.

Additional Receptors

2.2. As requested by Cherwell District Council, we set out below an assessment of the landscape effects on Dolton Lane Bridleway and Begbroke Ancient Woodland as separately identified landscape receptors.

Dolton Lane

2.3. Dolton Lane is an historic bridleway and part of the route is aligned with the north western site boundary and then passes through the northern part of the site. The Council's 'PR9 Land West of Yarnton Development Brief' (November 2021) ('the Council's Development Brief') identifies Dalton Lane as the 'Dalton Lane Green Corridor'. Within the Vision and Objectives section of the brief, Dalton Lane is identified as part of a green infrastructure corridor that will *"provide enhanced areas of habitat, green walking and cycle routes and enable access to the countryside"*.

2.4. To inform our assessment of Dolton Lane, various sources of information, were reviewed, comprising:

- Historic mapping from 1880s onwards (National Library of Scotland: <https://maps.nls.uk>);
- Tree and Hedgerow Impact Analysis. Veteran Tree Assessment (FLAC, October 2020);
- PR9 Land West of Yarnton Development Brief (November 2021);
- Photographs of Dolton Lane taken by the Merton College consultant team, in Spring Summer and Autumn 2020.

2.5. On the basis of these sources, and using the methodology adopted to inform the 2021 LVIA, the following judgements have been made about the value, susceptibility, overall sensitivity, mitigation potential, magnitude of change and overall effect of the Proposed Development.

Value

2.6. Dolton Lane is an historic route identified in the Council's Development Brief as an important element of the local green infrastructure network. It is lined by hedgerow and trees, with some identified to have 'Veteran' status. On this basis, and following the criteria established in Matrix 1 of the original LVIA, it is judged that Dolton Lane is a **High** value landscape receptor.

Susceptibility

2.7. Dolton Lane is composed of a simple but consistent arrangement of landscape features e.g. unpaved lane with grass verges, lined by hedgerow and trees, some of which are identified to have 'Veteran' status. Removal of any of these features would alter the character of the

landscape receptor. However, the nature of the lane (particularly its slightly sunken form and dense boundary vegetation) means that it has minimal physical or visual relationship with the surrounding landscape, and the immediate context does not play a notable role in its character. On this basis it is judged to have a **Medium** susceptibility to the Proposed Development.

Overall Sensitivity

2.8. The overall sensitivity of Dolton Lane as a landscape receptor is judged to be **Medium-High**.

Mitigation

2.9. The approach to providing mitigation for potential impacts on Dolton Lane is provided in the Movement and Green Infrastructure Parameter Plans, which retain Dolton Lane in its current form set within public open space alongside (see Figure 12 below – ‘Landscape-Led Principles’). The text below summarises the approach taken, identifying the mitigation that is specifically relevant to Dolton Lane.

2.10. Guidance regarding the relationship with Dolton Lane, provided in Chapter 6 of the Council’s Development Brief, has been followed. Of particular relevance are Figures 15 and 16 of the Brief, which are summarised below:

- Figure 16 indicates that an offset of 5 metres should be provided between Dolton Lane and built form (including footpaths) proposed to the east. The masterplan has evolved to provide an offset of at least 5 metres, and built form is proposed only outside the Root Protection Areas (‘RPAs’) of trees/hedgerow along Dolton Lane;
- As required by Section 6.4.5 of the Council’s Development Brief, the masterplan proposes a paved north-south walking and cycling route, perpendicular to the lane’s broadly north-south alignment. Where the lane diverts eastwards to adjoin the A44, its route and hedgerow boundary are retained and protected within a green corridor. In addition, and separate to the route of Dalton Lane, a separate green corridor is proposed, continuing further to the south, on either side of an existing hedgerow. This is referred to in the updated Design and Access Statement as ‘Central Walk’ (see page 70 of the updated Design and Access Statement). This provides a continuation of the green infrastructure network through the site, connecting with Cassington Road, as also requested by the Council’s Development Brief;
- Where the proposed road providing access to the northern part of the site needs to cross Dolton Lane, the road is aligned with existing field gates to minimise loss of vegetation to facilitate access;
- The valuable hedgerows and trees along the route of Dolton Lane are proposed to be retained and reinforced with woodland planting and native specimen shrubs to further support existing wildlife. Informal character breaks in the existing vegetation will act as crossing points connecting the development to meadow hills and countryside beyond.

Magnitude of Change

2.11. The Proposed Development retains the route of Dolton Lane and the majority of hedgerow and trees that line its route. A small number of trees are proposed for removal (reference nos. TG7013, TG7012, T7008 and T7023). In all cases the trees are to be removed because of extensive dieback, as identified by FLAC the applicant’s arboriculturalist. All other trees along Dolton Lane, including all Veteran Trees, are to be retained.

- 2.12. It is not proposed that the surface of Dolton Lane itself will be altered, with the exception of the short section where it connects directly to the A44, and no kerbs or lighting will be introduced to the lane.
- 2.13. As a result of the mitigation proposals designed into the scheme (as described above), direct changes to Dolton Lane will be limited to the introduction of a short section of paved surface at the far eastern end of the lane (as mentioned above), where the proposed access road into the northern part of the site crosses Dolton Lane. Although the Development Proposal will alter the landscape context to the east and south of Dolton Lane, as noted in the baseline, the density of hedgerow and trees lining the route are such that views out are limited, and as a consequence the surroundings have only minimal influence on the character of the lane.
- 2.14. It is judged that the overall magnitude of change will be **Slight**.

Overall Effect

- 2.15. The overall effect of the **Slight** magnitude of change experienced by this **Medium-High** landscape receptor will be **Minor Adverse** at all stages (construction, operational and residual).
- 2.16. There would be no change to the cumulative baseline.

Begbroke Ancient Woodland

Value

- 2.17. Begbroke Wood is an area of Ancient Woodland and a Local Nature Reserve. No public access is available but this woodland area is a notable and characteristic feature of the locality (and identified as a key characteristic of the Wooded Estatelands Landscape Type by the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study).
- 2.18. It is judged to be a **High** value landscape receptor.

Susceptibility

- 2.19. It is judged that the area of woodland has a **High** susceptibility to change.

Overall Sensitivity

- 2.20. Overall the receptor is judged to have a **High** sensitivity.

Mitigation

- 2.21. Begbroke Wood falls outside the site red line boundary and there would be no direct impacts on it as a result of the Proposed Development. The Council's Development Brief (page 49) states that *"in line with Government guidance a buffer zone of at least 15m is to be provided at the edge of Begbroke ancient woodland"*. The proposed offset between Begbroke Wood and the Proposed Development (minimum of 190 metres between Begbroke Wood and proposed built form) falls comfortably beyond this offset requirement, as demonstrated by the Green Infrastructure Parameter Plan (drawing no. DE234_17 Rev H) and the Green Infrastructure Plan (Figure 10 of the original LVIA).

Magnitude of Change

- 2.22. It is judged that there will be no change to this landscape receptor. There are no direct impacts as a result of the Proposed Development (e.g. no trees need to be removed and

public access will still not be permitted or promoted, so footfall will not increase). There is no built form proposed within 190 metres of the Ancient Woodland, and the intention withing the Proposed Development to introduce a new 'buffer' woodland as shown on the Green Infrastructure Parameter Plan, will further reduce the potential for built form to impact upon the setting of Begbroke Wood.

Overall Effect

- 2.23. The overall effect that results from this High sensitivity receptor experiencing a Negligible magnitude of change is judged to be **Negligible** at all stages (construction, operational and residual).
- 2.24. There would be no change to the cumulative baseline.

3. Evidence of Landscape Led Approach

- 3.1. Formulation of the parameters and principles in forming the Proposed Development have been landscape-led from the outset. The initial vision, the Applicant's representations at the Local Plan Review EiP, discussions forming part of the Council's Development Brief process, testing and assessment through the original LVIA process and communication of the landscape led design principles are all explained in detail at Section 4 of the amended Design and Access Statement.
- 3.2. They reinforce the key status of the landscape-led approach, which underpins the Proposed Development, an approach which can be summarised as follows:

1. Development Extent

The physical extent of the proposed development area is a result of examining in three dimensions how built form can sit comfortably within the landscape, as viewed from publicly accessible positions. This has directly shaped the extent of development, particularly to the west.

2. Development Height

The development parameters set out four separate grades of height parameters (up to 2 / 2.5 / 3 / 4 storey) and the positioning of these height parameters are the direct consequence of examining the visibility of building height in the landscape. Thus, the more sensitive western side edges have a maximum height of 2 storey to enable this built form to assimilate successfully into the transition from countryside to urban character.

3. Countryside Transition

Whilst development height and extent relate to the transition of the Proposed Development into the countryside, it is also shaped by other landscape-led decisions.

To the west, the positioning of retained agriculture on the higher land ensures that users of the wider countryside perceive land immediately east of Frogwelldown Lane as being rural in character. When moving westwards towards the Proposed development (from three potential routes – two of which are new) the transition is designed to relate well to the change in site gradient (see original LVIA Figure 7). This transition is assisted by the Meadowlands that provide publicly accessible land within and through informal parkland with mown paths and seating / viewing locations.

To the north, retained agricultural to the south of Begbroke, with a further substantial community wood to the south, ensures a rural setting for Begbroke is retained, whilst maintaining a sense of openness around this settlement.

4. Community Woodland - Connection and Protection

The position and extent of the Community Woodland has been directly shaped by landscape related influences. It is in its proposed position due to being in a highly accessible position for existing and proposed communities, to protect the integrity of the existing woodland, to provide habitat connectivity, and to enclose the northern extent of development, thereby assimilating built form within the landscape and minimising visual impact.

5. Integrated Hedgerows, Trees and SuDS

A key feature of the existing site is the existing field pattern, with a range of mature hedgerows, native trees and drainage ditches. These valued landscape features are not only retained but directly shape the structure, form and character of the Proposed Development's parameters and principles. They become multi-functional green corridors, with drainage, play, footpaths and key placemaking features (see below).

6. Restored Historic Hedgerows

A number of historic hedgerows (see original LVIA Figure 8) are to be replanted to the south and west of the Proposed Development, thereby bringing lost historic landscape features back to life. They also assist in the transition of the Proposed Development into this countryside context and are the product of extended discussions with the Council's Landscape Officers and other professionals over several years.

7. Enhanced Access to the Countryside

Frogwelldown Lane was identified at a very early stage in the design process as a highly valued landscape feature, but with limitations with regard to its accessibility from the existing village of Yarnton. A key landscape-led design was to identify two new footpath / cycle routes linking both the existing and new communities to this feature, thereby increasing accessibility to the countryside, and appreciation of this valued landscape element.

Similarly, Dolton Lane was recognised as a valued landscape asset in the northern part of the site. It was identified through consultation that the optimal approach to this landscape feature was to retain its mature vegetated edges and informal surfacing, and to maintain it as an unlit route. Development frontages will overlook, rather than back on, to this feature, and be well set back with other separate lit footpaths set some distance from it to avoid an urbanizing effect.

8. Landscape Led Placemaking

A number of landscape features identified have directly shaped the proposed Placemaking Plan (see page ?? of the amended Design and Access Statement), which includes specifically character responses to accentuate the role of the existing landscape in creating a sense of place and an appropriate setting for the new community.

These features include:

- The Central Walk;
- The Central Green;
- The Neighbourhood Green;
- Green Corridors;
- Rural Edge;
- Green Edge.