

# LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Land off Balmoral Avenue,  
Banbury, Oxfordshire

**Project:** Residential development for up to 49 dwellings

**Location:** Land off Balmoral Avenue, Banbury

**Date:** 27<sup>th</sup> January 2022

**Prepared for:** Lone Star Land Limited

**Reference:** 20\_140\_LVIA\_R01C



## Table of contents

<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>	
1.1. Terms of instruction .....	1	
1.2. Introduction .....	1	
1.3. Scope .....	2	
1.4. Site Location .....	2	
1.5. Study Area .....	3	
<b>2. Baseline Study – Policy.....</b>	<b>4</b>	
2.1. Introduction .....	4	
2.2. National.....	4	
2.3. District .....	5	
2.4. Local .....	6	
<b>3. Baseline Study – Landscape .....</b>	<b>7</b>	
3.1. Landscape Fabric .....	7	
3.1. Statutory and Non-Statutory Designations .....	10	
3.2. Access .....	11	
3.3. Landscape fabric summary .....	11	
3.4. Landscape Character .....	12	
3.5. Landscape Sensitivity .....	3	
3.6. Landscape character sensitivity .....	3	
<b>4. Baseline Study – Visual.....</b>	<b>4</b>	
4.1. Introduction .....	4	
4.2. Zone of theoretical visibility .....	4	
4.3. Visual context summary .....	7	
<b>5. Development Proposal and Mitigation.....</b>	<b>8</b>	
5.1. Introduction .....	8	
5.2. Design principles .....	8	
<b>6. Assessment of landscape effects .....</b>	<b>13</b>	
6.1. Introduction .....	13	
6.2. Effects on landscape fabric .....	13	
6.3. Effects on landscape character .....	14	
<b>7. Assessment of visual effects .....</b>	<b>16</b>	
7.1. Introduction .....	16	
7.2. Viewpoint assessments .....	16	
<b>8. Conclusions .....</b>	<b>24</b>	

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Terms of instruction

- 1.1.1. The Principal Author of this report is Sarah Gibson BA (Hons) DIP LA CMLI (Chartered Landscape Architect), Director at Mood Landscape Ltd. The Principal Author is a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (LI) and is therefore required to uphold the professional and ethical standards within the LI Code of Conduct.
- 1.1.2. This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been commissioned by Lone Star Land. It has been prepared in relation to a proposed residential development at land off Balmoral Avenue, Banbury, Oxfordshire (the site).

### 1.2. Introduction

- 1.2.1. The proposed 3.15 hectare application site will comprise a residential development of up to 49 dwellings, public open space, and other infrastructure (known herein as the 'Proposed Development').
- 1.2.2. The baseline findings have been used to inform the design strategy and to ensure a landscape led approach to the Proposed Development as a primary consideration.
- 1.2.3. The site upon which the baseline study is based differs to the application site. The outcome of the baseline study and pre-application discussions led to the application site boundary being reduced in area. In order to avoid confusion, the baseline site boundary will be shown within this study with a green line and the application site boundary will be shown

with a red line. Figure one below illustrates the two different site boundaries.



Figure 1: Boundaries

1.2.4. The assessment considers the effects of the Proposed Development upon the landscape and visual resources of the site and surrounding area and the potential mitigation measures required.

1.2.5. Site visits were carried out in September 2020, April 2021 and August 2021, photos from these visits are included within this report. The photos of the representative viewpoints provided were all taken in April 2021.

### **1.3. Scope**

1.3.1. This LVIA has been prepared based on the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment third edition (GLVIA3). In line with common practice, the LVIA covers:

- Baseline description of the site, the landscape setting and its character; identification of local landscape and visual sensitivities and the planning context.
- Description of the Proposed Development, design and mitigation.
- Assessment of the landscape effects.
- Assessment of the visual effects.

1.3.2. The methodology for the LVIA can be found in appendix A.

### **1.4. Site Location**

1.4.1. The baseline site is situated on the western edge of Banbury, north of Broughton Road and close to an area known as Bretch Hill.

1.4.2. It is formed by a sloping group of four fields separated by native hedges and trees and stock proof fencing. The land is currently in agricultural use and at the time of the site visits was in arable use.

1.4.3. The nearest residential properties are found at Thornbury Rise to the north and Balmoral Avenue and Denbigh Close to the east.

1.4.4. Land to the east of the site was granted outline planning permission for a residential development for 49 dwellings on 1st June 2021. The appeal reference is APP/C3105/W/21/327109. The planning application reference is 20/01643/OUT.

1.4.5. The approved residential development on land immediately to the east of the site is considered to form part of the baseline site.

1.4.6. To the west of the site is agricultural land in pastoral and arable use.

1.4.7. There are no buildings on the site.



## 1.5. Study Area

- 1.5.1. The study area has been determined through a combination of desk study and subsequent field survey and identifies the extent upon which the Proposed Development has the potential to affect, either directly or indirectly, the landscape character or visual amenity of the area.
- 1.5.2. The extent of the study area is illustrated in figure 2 and is limited to within a 2km radius of the site.

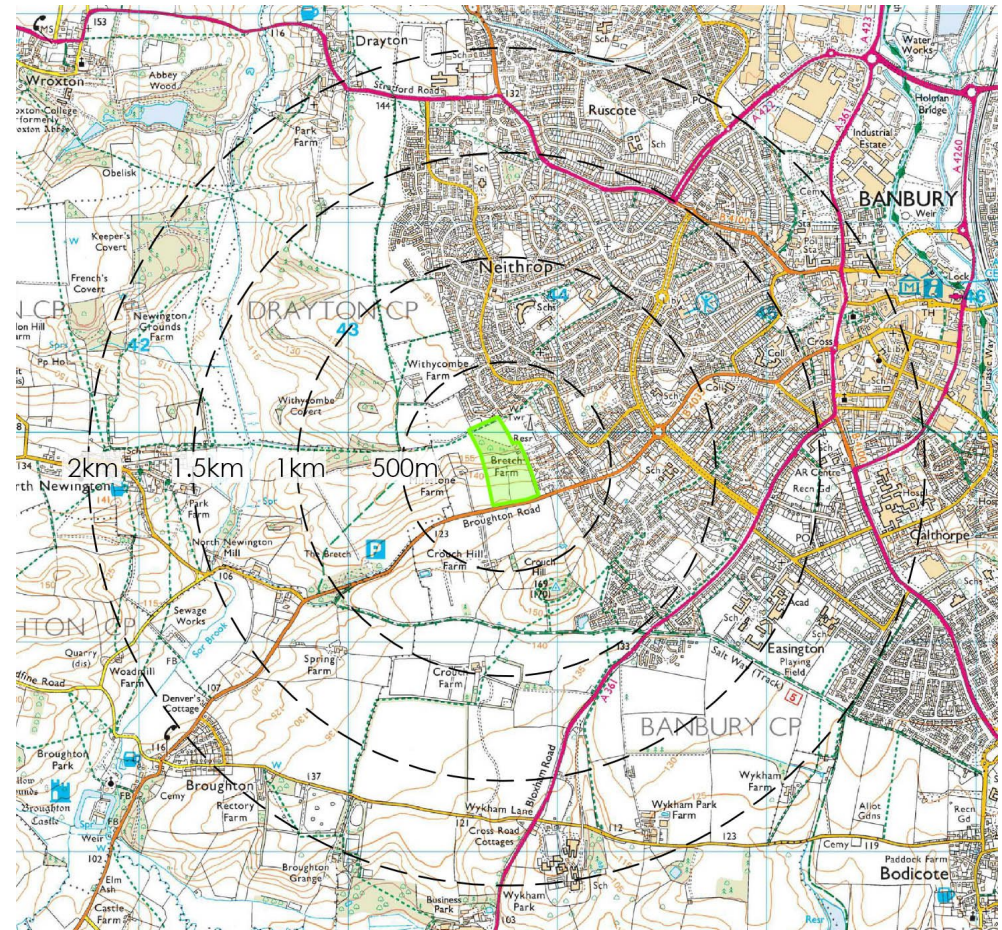


Figure 2: Study area

## 2. Baseline Study – Policy

### 2.1. Introduction

- 2.1.1. A Planning Statement prepared by Savills is submitted separately which undertakes a detailed analysis of the policy considerations relevant to the site.
- 2.1.2. This section has been structured to provide an overview of national and regional planning policy considered relevant to this assessment.
- 2.1.3. The table in figure 3 lists the planning policies that are considered of greatest relevance to the application site and the nature of the proposed development.

Level	Adopted Policy
National Planning Policy Framework  Feb 2019	12. Achieving well-designed places
	15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031  July 2015	ESD 13: Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement
	Policy ESD 15: The Character of the Built and Historic Environment

Figure 3: Relevant planning policy table

### 2.2. National

- 2.2.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2021) sets out the Government's planning guidance and policy approach. The NPPF is therefore a key component in the consideration and determination of all planning applications for proposals within England. It also provides a framework within which locally prepared plans can be produced. The following extracts from each of the policies listed in figure 3 are of particular relevance to this study:

#### 12. Achieving well-designed places

127. 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).

#### 15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:



*a) 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;*

## **2.3. District**

2.3.1. The site lies within the administrative area of Cherwell District Council. The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2032 was adopted in July 2015. It sets out the strategic objectives and broad spatial strategy to guide sustainable future development and growth for the district. The following extracts from each of the policies listed in figure 3 are of relevance to this study.

### **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 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.*

### **Policy ESD 15: The Character of the Built and Historic Environment**

*Successful design is founded upon an understanding and respect for an area's unique built, natural and cultural context. New development will be expected to complement and enhance the character of its context through sensitive siting, layout and high quality design. All new development will be required to meet high design standards. Where development is in the vicinity of any of the District's distinctive natural or historic assets, delivering high quality design that complements the asset will be essential.*

*New development proposals should:*

- *Be designed to deliver high quality safe, attractive, durable and healthy places to live and work in. Development of all scales should be designed to improve the quality and appearance of an area and the way it functions Deliver buildings, places and spaces that can adapt to changing*

*social, technological, economic and environmental conditions*

- *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*
- *Respect the traditional pattern of routes, spaces, blocks, plots, enclosures and the form, scale and massing of buildings. Development should be designed to integrate with existing streets and public spaces, and buildings configured to create clearly defined active public frontages*
- *Promote permeable, accessible and easily understandable places by creating spaces that connect with each other, are easy to move through and have recognisable landmark features*
- *Demonstrate a holistic approach to the design of the public realm to create high quality and multi-functional streets and places that promotes pedestrian movement and integrates different modes of transport, parking and servicing. The principles set out in The Manual for Streets should be followed*
- *Integrate and enhance green infrastructure and incorporate biodiversity enhancement features where possible (see Policy ESD 10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment and Policy ESD 17 Green Infrastructure ). 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 sense of vitality*

## **2.4. Local**

- 2.4.1. There is no neighbourhood plan or any other published planning guidance relating to the locality of the site.



### 3. Baseline Study – Landscape

#### 3.1. Landscape Fabric

3.1.1. The landscape fabric baseline study reviews the baseline site area shown within the green boundary in figure 1.

3.1.2. The site is formed by a sloping group of four fields separated by mature native hedges and trees and stock proof fencing. The land is currently in agricultural use and at the time of the site visits was in arable use.

##### Boundaries

3.1.3. The southern boundary is shared with Broughton Road which is a main route into Banbury from the west. The boundary is defined by a mature and dense native hedgerow and trees, up to 9m in height, which is a significant landscape feature on the entrance into Banbury from the west.

3.1.4. The western boundary is formed by a continuous native hedgerow which is shared with the open farmland beyond.

3.1.5. An area of woodland scrub wraps around the west, north and east boundaries of the northern field. In the north of the site, it measures approximately 30m in width. Public Right of Way (PRoW) 120/24/10 follows the northern boundary of the site and is located within this area of woodland scrub.

3.1.6. The eastern boundary is shared with properties on Balmoral Avenue and Denbigh Close in the south of the site. The northern part of the site shares its eastern boundary with the neighbouring approved residential development.

3.1.7. The eastern boundary planting varies along its length and consists of native hedgerow, mature trees and areas of scrub.



Figure 4: southern boundary shared with Broughton Road (site is located behind the hedge on the left-hand side)



Figure 5: Woodland scrub along northern boundary

- 3.1.8. There is a level change close to the eastern boundary, which is located within the neighbouring approved development site. The trees and vegetation forming the eastern boundary sit at the top of the slope and the neighbouring site is positioned at the lower level.
- 3.1.9. Internally the site contains the vegetated field boundaries that separate the four parcels. The two upper fields are separated by the remnants of a hedgerow, which has grown into a row of trees running east west across the site.
- 3.1.10. The two lower fields are separated by a native hedgerow and trees that run north south.



*Figure 6: The eastern boundary taken from the neighbouring site. The level change between the sites can be seen.*



*Figure 7: Internal site boundary separating the northern fields*



### Topography

- 3.1.11. The site is located on a south facing slope. The upper field has the shallowest gradient. The highest point of the site is located in the northwest corner of this field, at approximately 161AOD. The upper field falls diagonally to its southeast corner, which lies at approximately 154AOD.
- 3.1.12. The remaining three fields have a steep and consistent gradient, which falls towards Broughton Road, where the lowest point is found at approximately 129AOD.
- 3.1.13. Land to the west of the site falls to the Sor Brook which is located approximately 900m west of the site and at approximately 110AOD is the lowest point in the study area.
- 3.1.14. Beyond the Sor Brook the land rises again at North Newington.
- 3.1.15. East of the site the land rises gently across the urban settlement of Banbury.

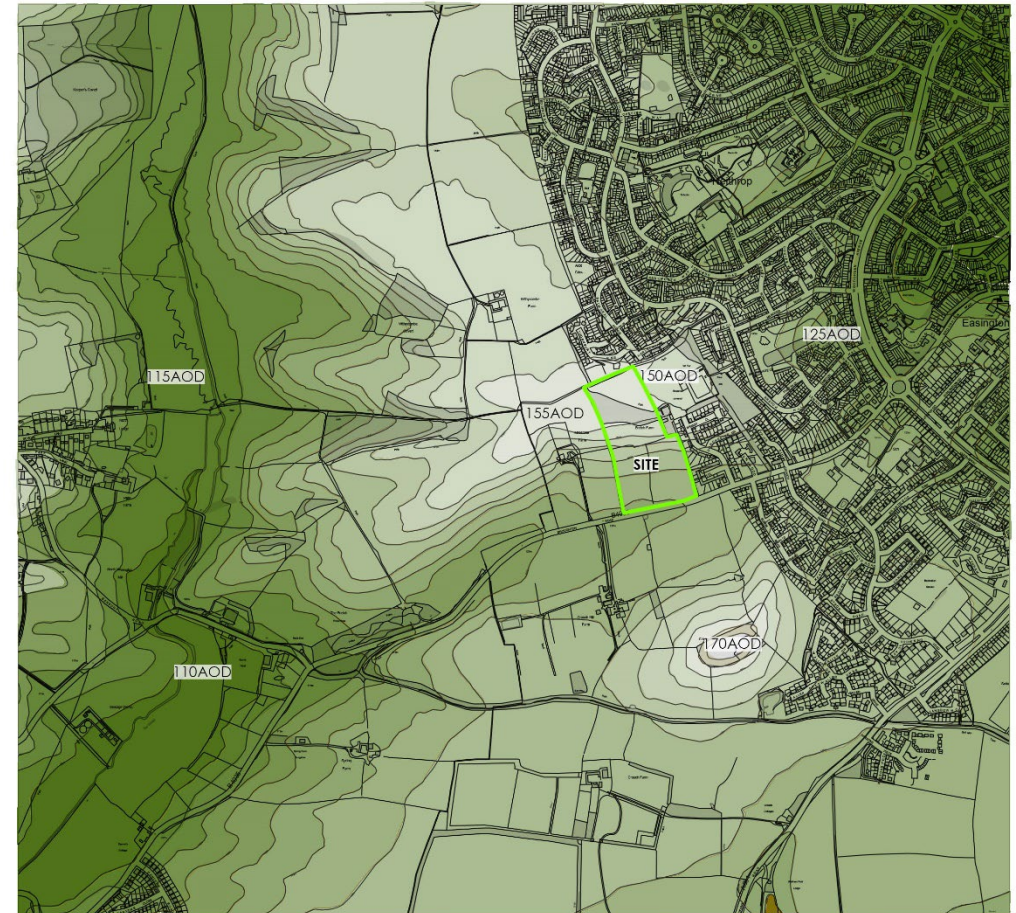


Figure 8: Topography

### 3.1. Statutory and Non-Statutory Designations

#### Conservation Areas

- 3.1.1. Conservation areas exist to manage and protect the special architectural and historic interest of a place. They are designated by local authorities under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 3.1.2. Conservation Areas at Drayton, North Newington and Banbury are all found within the 2km study area.

#### Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

- 3.1.3. A SSSI is a formal conservation designation. It describes an area that's of particular interest to science due to the rare species of fauna or flora it contains or important geological or physiological features that may lie in its boundaries.
- 3.1.4. The nearest SSSI to the site is Neithrop Fields Cutting SSSI which is 2km north of the site and outside of the study area.

#### Cultural and Historical

- 3.1.5. The desk study has revealed that there are no scheduled ancient monuments within the study area.
- 3.1.6. There are a variety of listed buildings within the study area. Those closest to the site, which have the potential to be affected by the Proposed Development are listed below and represented by pink stars on figure 9:

- Withycombe Farm – Grade II
- Crouch Farmhouse – Grade II

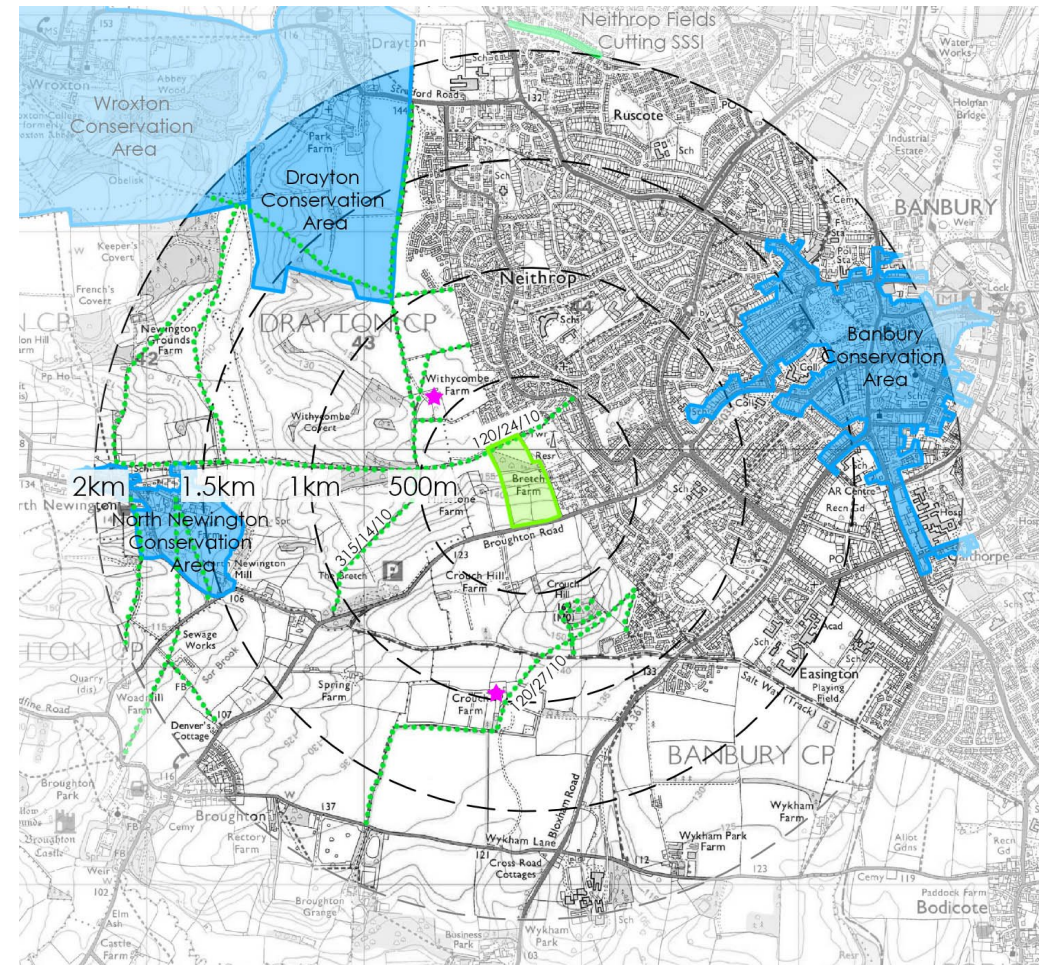


Figure 9: Site context



### **3.2. Access**

- 3.2.1. Public Right of Way (PRoW) 120/24/10 passes through the north of the site within an area of dense woodland scrub which gives the route a rural wooded character.
- 3.2.2. Where the route leaves the site in the northwest corner it exits the woodland and enters an open field, which has a distinctly different character. Heading west, the route continues to North Newington.
- 3.2.3. Where the route exits the site in the northeast corner it continues across the neighbouring site through scrub and an area of woodland into Banbury town.
- 3.2.4. There is a network of PRoW within the study area, mainly found within the countryside to the north, west and south of the site. Those with most relevance to this study have been highlighted in figure 9.

### **3.3. Landscape fabric summary**

- 3.3.1. The baseline study site comprises four improved pastures surrounded by native hedgerows and mature trees and with an area of woodland scrub in the north of the site.
- 3.3.2. The native hedgerows and mature trees found on the site boundaries, despite needing some management, provide a clear and well-established structure.
- 3.3.3. The site slopes steeply southwards towards Broughton Road.
- 3.3.4. There are three Conservation Areas within the study area. However, due to distance and the surrounding landform they have little inter-relationship with the site.

- 3.3.5. There are no other landscape designations within the study area.
- 3.3.6. The landscape fabric is in average condition. This type of landscape fabric is commonplace in the locality.
- 3.3.7. The analysis of the landscape fabric of the site is taken through to inform judgements on value, susceptibility and overall landscape sensitivity included in section 3.5.



*Figure 10: PRoW 120/24/10 passes through the north of the site within an area of woodland scrub*

### 3.4. Landscape Character

3.4.1. Landscape character is defined as the distinct pattern or combination of elements that occur consistently in a particular landscape to make it different and unique from one place to another. It is how we perceive the interaction of several aspects recognised as the earth sciences, historical and cultural influences, biodiversity, visual and sensory qualities, which all combine to create local distinctiveness and a sense of place. Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) can be undertaken at several scales from national level through to local or site level.

3.4.2. A desk study revealed that the following Character Assessments were applicable to the site and the surroundings.

Level	Landscape Character Area / Type
<b>National</b>	
National Character Area (NCA)	95: Northamptonshire Uplands
May 2014	
<b>Local</b>	
'Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study' (OWLS)	Farmland Plateau
2004	
Banbury Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment	Site 1
September 2013	

Figure 11: Landscape Character Assessments

#### National

3.4.3. Natural England places the site within National Character Area (NCA) 95: Northamptonshire Uplands. Some of the key characteristics of this landscape that are of relevance to this study are:

- **Gently rolling rounded hills and valleys with many long, low ridgelines and great variety of landform. Wide, far-reaching views from the edges and across the ridgetops.**
- *Sparse woodland cover, but with scattered, visually prominent, small, broadleaved woods, copses and coverts, particularly on higher ground.*
- **Mixed farming dominates with open arable contrasting with permanent pasture.**
- **Typical 'planned countryside' with largely rectangular, enclosed field patterns surrounded by distinctive, high, often A-shaped hedgerows with many mature hedgerow trees.**
- *Small pockets of semi-natural vegetation with many small scattered broadleaved woodlands*
- *Nationally rare, locally abundant and prominent ridge and furrow, with frequent deserted and shrunken settlements.*
- *Nucleated with cob, ironstone and limestone in older buildings. Brick buildings in some villages. Extensive new developments in villages along main transport corridors and in the two main towns.*

3.4.4. The sloping site is arable land formed by rectangular fields surrounded by hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees, which

is consistent with the key characteristics of NCA 95 shown in bold.

3.4.5. NCA 95 identifies Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEO) for the character area. SEO 1 and 2 are of relevance to this study:

*SEO 1: Protect, manage and promote the historic and archaeological features, designed landscapes and field patterns – including the parkland, battlefield sites, canals, ridge and furrow and settlement sites, and distinctive high hedgerows with their many trees – to ensure that these key features for sense of place and history are conserved, people's enjoyment and understanding is increased, and recreation opportunities are enhanced.*

*SEO 2: Conserve, enhance, expand and restore the semi-natural and farmed features of the area – including the mix of agricultural production, particularly the pasture and meadows, patches of semi-natural habitats, and veteran and ancient trees – to enhance biodiversity and landscape character and to safeguard the continued sustainable provision of food.*

3.4.6. Whilst the NCA provides a generalised wider background, it is considered that the smaller assessment scale of the local character assessment affords a sounder understanding of the local subtleties that determine the character at a more appropriate scale for this study.

### National Character Area 95 Northamptonshire Uplands

Note: In most instances, the NCA boundary is not precisely mapped and should be considered as a one of transition between NCAs.

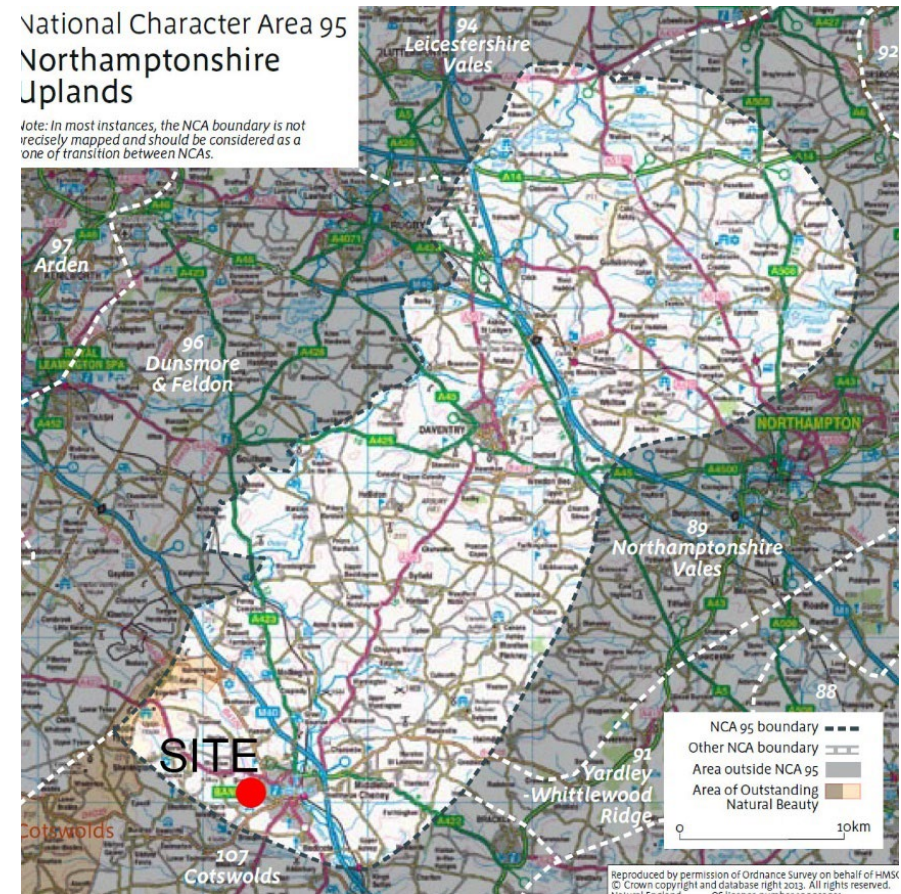


Figure 12: NCA 95: Northampton Uplands Location Plan



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District

3.4.7. In 2004 Oxfordshire County Council published the 'Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study' (OWLS), which identifies the character of the area at a local level.

3.4.8. OWLS identifies the site as being wholly within the Farmland Plateau landscape type. The landscape type is described as *"a high limestone plateau with a distinctive elevated and exposed character, broad skies and long-distance views. Large scale arable fields dominate the landscape, with some medium-sized plantations partially obscuring the otherwise open views"*.

3.4.9. Land to the east and north of the site is identified as being within the urban area of Banbury. The OWLS does not cover this area.

3.4.10. The site borders the Upstanding Village Farmlands landscape type to the south. Broughton Road separates the site from the Upstanding Village Farmlands landscape type. The road forms a clearly defined edge and physical separation between the two landscape types.

3.4.11. The Upstanding Village Farmlands is described as *"A hilly landscape with a strong pattern of hedgerows and nucleated villages characteristically built from the local ironstone"*.

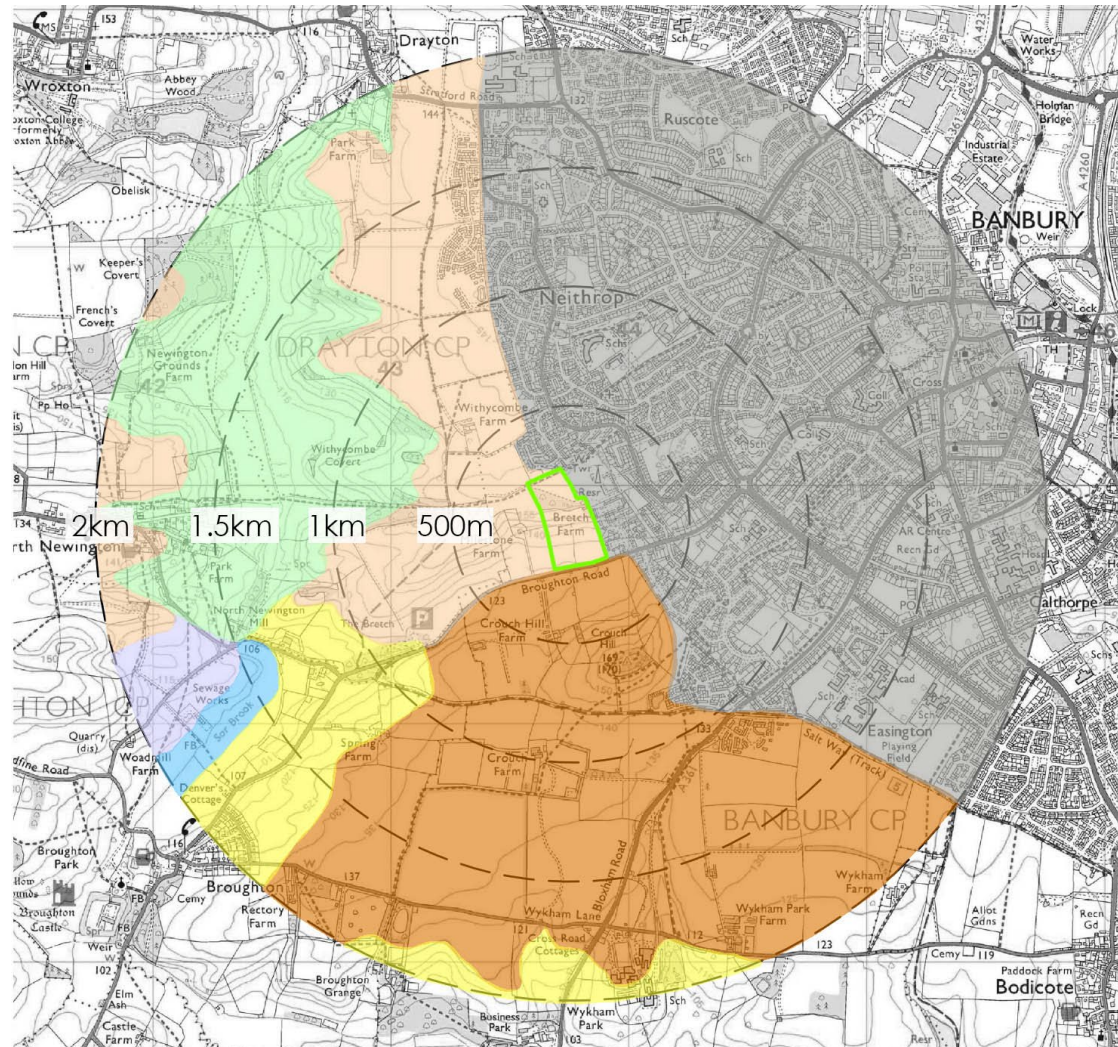
3.4.12. The key characteristics of the Upstanding Village Farmlands are:

- A steep sided, undulating landform.
- A well defined geometric pattern of medium-sized fields enclosed by prominent hedgerows.

- A strong settlement pattern of compact, nucleated villages of varying sizes with little dispersal in wider countryside

3.4.13. The land to the south of the site is broadly consistent with the Upstanding Village Farmlands landscape type.

3.4.14. Being in the border area between the two landscape types, the site forms a transition between the two areas and does share some of the characteristics of the Upstanding Village Farmlands. In the south of the baseline site the land is "steep sided, undulating landform" consistent with the Upstanding Village Farmlands. The northern part of the site is gently rolling which is characteristic of the Farmland Plateau landscape type.



### Landscape Types

- Farmland Plateau
- Farmland Slopes and Valley Sides
- River Meadowlands
- Upstanding Village Farmlands
- Wooded Pasture Valleys and Slopes
- Rolling Village Pastures
- Urban (not included within OWLS)

3.4.15. The key characteristics of the Farmland Plateau character area and how they relate to the site and the wider study area are shown in the following table.

3.4.16. Approximately half the 2km study area is located within the urban area of Banbury town which has no consistency with the Farmland Plateau landscape type. The descriptions in relation to the study area provided below excludes the urban area shown in figure 13.

Key Characteristic	Evident within site	Description in relation to the site	Evident within study area	Description in relation to the study area
Level or gently rolling open ridges dissected by narrow valleys and broader vales.	✓	The upper portion of the site is a gently rolling open ridge however the lower portion is steeply sloping.	✓	Land to the north and west of the site is gently rolling and is dissected by the valley of the Sor Brook.
Large, regular arable fields enclosed by low thorn hedges and limestone walls.	✓	The site consists of regular (rectangular) fields enclosed by thorn hedges	✓	The majority of the study area outside the urban boundary consists of regular arable fields enclosed by hedges. Limestone walls have not been found during the fieldwork.
Rectilinear plantations and shelterbelts.	✗	The site does not contain a plantation or shelterbelt	✓	Rectilinear plantations and shelterbelts are found particularly in areas to the west and north of the site.
Sparsely settled landscape with a few nucleated settlements.	✗	The site is on the edge of Banbury town which is a large settlement	✓	The study area outside the urban boundary is very sparse. Settlements are generally individual farms. The 2km study area boundary just touches on the edges of North Newington, Broughton and Drayton which are village settlements.
Long, straight roads running along the ridge summits	✗	Not applicable	✗	The roads within the study area are generally not found on ridge summits.

Figure 14: Key characteristics of Farmland Plateau character area and how they relate to the site



3.4.17. The landscape strategy for the Farmland Plateau character area states:

*Conserve the open and remote character of the landscape and maintain the large-scale field pattern.*

3.4.18. Guidelines for achieving this strategy are provided as follows:

- *Conserve the open, spacious character of the landscape by limiting woodland planting on the more exposed ridge tops. Locate new planting in the dips and folds of the landscape and establish tree belts around airfields, quarries and other large structures to reduce their visual impact using locally characteristic native tree and shrub species such as ash, oak and beech.*
- *Strengthen the field pattern by planting up gappy hedges using locally characteristic species such as hawthorn and blackthorn.*
- *Promote environmentally-sensitive maintenance of hedgerows, including coppicing and layering when necessary, to maintain a height and width appropriate to the landscape type.*
- *Protect stone walls from deterioration.*
- *Conserve all remaining areas of semi-improved and unimproved grassland and encourage conversion of arable to pasture.*
- *Maintain the sparsely settled rural character of the landscape by concentrating new development in and around existing settlements. The exposed character of the*

*plateau is particularly sensitive to visually intrusive development, large buildings and communication masts.*

- *Promote the use of local building materials, such as limestone and ironstone, and a scale of development appropriate to landscape type.*
- *Encourage appropriate restoration and after use of quarries to strengthen and enhance landscape character*

#### Local – Site Specific Character

3.4.19. Whilst the site does share some commonality with the published character assessments, they cover a wider area and are not specific to the situation of the site.

3.4.20. The published assessments do not consider the nature of the site-specific issues and context. Differences in landform, land use, landscape structure and influence of built development, which create variation in landscape character and local distinctiveness.

3.4.21. It is therefore useful to consider the landscape character of the site at its most local scale to consider what direct influences are found.

3.4.22. The rectilinear field pattern of the site is generally typical of the local area. However, the scale of the parcels within the baseline site is generally smaller than those in the wider area.

3.4.23. The field parcels are defined by mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees. The boundary hedgerows are largely intact and provide a good degree of enclosure however some have been unmanaged in recent years and are becoming fragmented in areas.

3.4.24. The immediate context of the site comprises a mix of residential and urban fringe land uses. To the north are properties on Thornbury Rise. A playground and football pitch associated with this residential area share a boundary with the site. This boundary is defined by a metal palisade fence which is poorly maintained in places and sits alongside the PRow that passes through the north of the site.

3.4.25. To the east properties on Balmoral Avenue which back on to the lower half of the baseline site. To the east of the northern half of the baseline site lies the adjacent parcel of land which has received approval for 49no. homes. This site is currently an area of urban fringe, it appears to have not been in agricultural use for some time. There are derelict agricultural buildings close to the shared boundary. The site contains an area of woodland through which the PRow links to the Bretch Hill residential area of Banbury. The woodland is heavily eroded by pedestrians and mountain bikes. This area will be developed for housing which will back onto the shared boundary. This will appear as a continuation of the existing character of Balmoral Avenue further increasing the surrounding urban influences in the east.

3.4.26. On the eastern boundary of the neighbouring site are a water tower and mobile phone mast, which are surrounded by metal palisade fencing. These are large and detracting features within the landscape which have a prominent urban influence on the surrounding character.

3.4.27. Immediately to the west are a group of agricultural fields almost identical in size, scale and shape to those within the baseline site. The northern parcels were in use as pony

paddocks at the time of the site visits. The fields of the lower slopes appear to also be used for grazing.

3.4.28. Beyond this to the west and northwest the land is also in agricultural use, but the field sizes increase in size.

3.4.29. The surrounding residential and urban fringe land uses reduce the sensitivity of the baseline site in comparison to the wider landscape type.

3.4.30. The analysis of the local landscape character of the site and its context is taken through to inform judgements on value, susceptibility and overall landscape sensitivity included in section 3.5.

### 3.5. Landscape Sensitivity

3.5.1. Landscape sensitivity is the degree to which the landscape can accommodate change without adverse impact on its character.

3.5.2. This section will look at the relevant published landscape sensitivity assessment and also carry out an assessment at a scale relevant to the study area.

#### Banbury Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment

3.5.3. The Banbury Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment was published in September 2013 to provide an evidence base to support the local plan. The report provides an assessment of the landscape sensitivity and capacity of ten sites on the periphery of Banbury.

3.5.4. The Proposed Development is located within the southeast corner of Site I, which is a linear parcel adjoining residential areas on the west side of Banbury. It extends from Broughton Road in the south to Stratford Road in the north.

3.5.5. The report highlights key observations relating to the landscape character of the site and provides a judgment on landscape sensitivity.

3.5.6. Some of the observations that relate to the Proposed Development site are:

- *In general, the potential for species is in the south of the site as the northern area is limited in value. Overall, the value of natural factors is medium – low.*

- *There is potential for unrecorded remains within the site to the west or south with Withycombe Farm or the Wroxton Estate. The cultural sensitivity of Site I is medium.*
- *In the south of the site, south of Withycombe Farm, the landscape becomes more intimate comprising smaller fields that are enclosed by hedgerows and hedgerow trees; these features are important to the setting of Withycombe Farm. The overall aesthetic quality of the site is medium.*
- *There are areas within the site where the landscape is in a good state of repair with the management of hedgerows and retention of historic field patterns; this is generally located within the south of the area.*
- *The landscape quality and condition is considered to be medium.*
- *The combined landscape sensitivity of Site I is medium.*

3.5.7. The Council's assessment considers the whole of the large site I as one large parcel with equal sensitivity. It has not considered how development of parts of the parcel that are less open, more closely associated with existing development and contained from the wider landscape may accommodate development.

3.5.8. A site specific assessment of the sensitivity has been undertaken, this combines a judgement on value and susceptibility.



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District Landscape Character

- 3.5.9. Landscape Value relates to a series of elements that are considered to influence and contribute to the perceived character of the Application Site. Paragraph 174 of the NPPF sets out the emphasis the planning system should have on 'protecting and enhancing valued landscapes'. Whilst it is easy to identify landscapes which have been afforded protection through statutory and non-statutory designation and policy, undesignated landscapes require careful consideration against this paragraph.
- 3.5.10. This section determines the value of the landscape type relevant to the site and study area. The table on the following page uses the criteria set out in the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note (TGN) 02/21: Assessing landscape value outside national designations (where these factors cross-over with those found in Box 5.1 of the GLVIA, these are highlighted) against which the character area and the site are assessed.
- 3.5.11. The table on the following page provides the criteria that have been considered and a brief description/comment for each in relation to the Farmland Plateau landscape type is provided.

Technical Guidance Note Factor	Description in relation to Farmland Plateau Landscape Type
Natural heritage (Conservation Interests)	Boundary hedgerows and trees and small rectilinear woodland plantations are the key features of natural heritage within the landscape type.
Cultural heritage (Conservation Interests)	The only notable heritage asset within the landscape type is Withycombe Farm, which is Grade II listed.
Landscape condition (Landscape quality - condition)	The landscape condition of the Farmland Plateau is generally fair to good. The network of hedgerows and hedgerow trees define and enclose the field pattern, and this is generally intact. The neighbouring residential developments and urban fringe land uses and boundary treatments, including the nearby water tower and mobile phone mast are detracting features within the landscape.
Associations	There are no known associations which would indicate a link between the Farmland Plateau area and any notable people or historical events that would contribute to perceptions of the natural beauty of the area.
Distinctiveness (Rarity/Representativeness)	This area of Farmland Plateau covers a large area from Broughton Road to Stratford Road and there are further areas of this landscape type within the locality particularly to the west beyond the Sor Brook Valley. It is therefore not considered that the components of this landscape type are rare.
Recreational (Recreation Value)	A network of routes passes through the farmland within the Farmland Plateau. Although falling within the Upstanding Village Farmlands landscape type rather than the Farmland Plateau, it is worth noting that Crouch Hill and the public open space around it is an important recreational area in the locality.
Perceptual (scenic) Scenic Quality	According to the published assessment Farmland Plateau is " <i>a high limestone plateau with a distinctive elevated and exposed character, broad skies and long-distance views. Large scale arable fields dominate the landscape, with some medium-sized plantations partially obscuring the otherwise open views</i> ". Within the locality there are some opportunities for long-distance open views as described however this has found to be mixed throughout the area. The baseline site is visually well contained and offers only medium distance views to the south.
Perceptual – wildness and tranquillity (perceptual aspects)	According to the published assessment Farmland Plateau is " <i>Sparsely settled landscape with a few nucleated settlements</i> " this indicates the landscape type has only pockets of human activity that would reduce tranquillity. This is the case in areas of Farmland Plateau further away from the town. However, in this zone, which abuts the urban town boundary, tranquillity is reduced due to the surrounding human activity in residential areas and on the surrounding roads. Wildness is also reduced due to the presence of homes, roads and views of the water tower and mobile phone mast.
Functional	The Farmland Plateau landscape type in this edge of settlement location does not perform a clearly identifiable or valuable function.

Figure 15: Landscape Value assessment of Farmland Plateau landscape type



3.5.12. On balance, the wider landscape context of the Farmland Plateau landscape type in this location is considered of **medium value** in landscape terms.

Value of the local landscape character

3.5.13. The natural heritage assets of the site are the boundary hedgerows and trees. There are no ecological or geological designations on the site or its immediate context.

3.5.14. In terms of cultural heritage interest, there are no historic features on the site. The nearest listed building is Withycombe Farm which lies approximately 500m to the northwest.

3.5.15. The condition of the site and its local context is considered to be fair. The hedgerows provide a largely intact enclosure pattern which is punctuated by mature trees. These features define the site and contribute to the quality of the landscape in this location. Some of the hedgerows have lacked recent maintenance and are beginning to 'grow out'. The neighbouring urban land uses including residential areas, water tower, mobile phone mast and associated boundary treatments influence the condition of the local landscape and contribute to a degraded appearance.

3.5.16. In relation to landscape associations, there are no known associations which would indicate a link between the site and its immediate context and any notable people or historical events that would contribute to perceptions of the natural beauty of the area.

3.5.17. The land use and landform of the site are broadly consistent with the characteristics of the Farmland Plateau landscape type. As such it is not considered that the landscape elements

on the site are rare. Due to its location adjacent to the settlement edge, the site is influenced by urban fringe characteristics whereas other areas of the wider agricultural land are not.

3.5.18. In terms of recreational opportunities, PRoW 120/24/10 passes through the north of the baseline site. This route links to a network of footpaths that allow walkers to enjoy the site and its immediate context. Immediately adjacent to the northern boundary of the site is a children's play area access from Thornbury Drive.

3.5.19. The views (scenic qualities) from the site and its immediate context are generally localised. Views are not possible from PRoW 120/24/10 within the site due to it passing through an area of dense woodland scrub. The most notable view into the site from the immediate surroundings is from Crouch Hill which is approximately 450m to the south of the site.

3.5.20. In relation to perceptual aspects, whilst the site itself retains an agricultural character it is influenced by the adjacent residential land uses. To the east and north and Broughton Road to the south. These serve to reduce levels of tranquillity at a local level. Wildness is also reduced due to the presence of homes, roads and views of the water tower and mobile phone mast.

3.5.21. In terms of functions of the landscape, the site is typical of an edge of settlement location and does not perform a clearly identifiable or valuable function.

3.5.22. Overall, the local landscape character of the site and its immediate surrounding context is considered of **low to medium value** in landscape terms.

Landscape susceptibility

3.5.23. GLVIA3 describes landscape susceptibility as *“the ability of the landscape receptor to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation”*.

3.5.24. This section will assess the susceptibility of the Farmland Plateau and the local landscape character in relation to the Proposed Development. Details of the Proposed Development including masterplans can be found in section 5.

Susceptibility of Farmland Plateau Landscape Type

3.5.25. The published Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment discusses the capacity for residential development within parcel I, it states *“There is a medium – high capacity for residential development within the northern area of the site comprising the three fields south of Stratford Road and west of Bretch Hill. The existing access track to Withycombe Farm heading north south provides a natural barrier to development in this direction. Any development in these fields should consider the adjacent Drayton Conservation Area and how development affects the setting. Residential development to the south of Withycombe Farm would not be appropriate as this would not be in keeping with the small scale valley along Broughton Road on the approach to Banbury.”*

3.5.26. The three fields mentioned above as having a high capacity for residential development have been developed since the assessment was published. This has extended Banbury's settlement boundary westwards.

3.5.27. The land use across the Farmland Plateau comprises a small to medium scale agricultural field pattern located alongside the settlement edge. The harsh urban edge of Banbury contains features such as close board or palisade fencing, lighting columns, water tower and mobile phone mast. These are detracting features within the Farmland Plateau landscape.

3.5.28. There is a sparse settlement pattern within the landscape type itself, comprising individual buildings and farm complexes. The landscape type is bounded to the south by Broughton Road and to the north Stratford Road cuts through it.

3.5.29. In terms of the landscape features, the hedgerow and tree network are extensive and relatively easy to retain due to their position on field boundaries or replace if necessary.

3.5.30. On balance, the wider landscape context of the Farmland Plateau is considered to be of **medium** susceptibility.

Susceptibility of local landscape character

3.5.31. The site and its local context are located in an elevated position on a south facing slope, however the strong network of hedgerows and hedgerow trees result in it being well contained.

3.5.32. The existing residential settlement edges to the east and north also add enclosure and influence the capacity of the landscape to accommodate a residential development.

3.5.33. The site is located directly adjacent to the existing settlement edge of Banbury. North of the site the existing settlement edge extends further to the west than the boundary of the

Proposed Development. The proximity of existing residential areas and the recent extension of the settlement boundary westwards to the north of the site is clear reference to the land use of the Proposed Development.

- 3.5.34. The site and its local context are characterised by field enclosures defined by hedgerows and trees which are in fair condition.
- 3.5.35. The land use of the site is susceptible to the development of a new residential development. However, although part of the site will change to built form, the key landscape features of the site (the boundary hedgerows and trees) will be retained and enhanced through the large areas of woodland thicket, wildflower swathes and additional hedgerows and trees. This will provide a softer edge to the settlement than is currently found and provide an appropriate transition between settlement and the more rural landscape to the west.
- 3.5.36. Overall, it is considered that the site and local landscape character is of **low** susceptibility to change.

### **3.6. Landscape character sensitivity**

- 3.6.1. The following conclusions on sensitivity are based on the detailed description and justification presented in the previous sections, which balance the professional judgements on value and susceptibility.
- 3.6.2. Overall, the analysis has determined that the Farmland Plateau landscape type is of **medium** value and **medium** susceptibility. It is considered that this assessment combined with the analysis of the current baseline conditions (set out in

earlier sections) results in this part of the Farmland Plateau landscape type as being of **medium sensitivity**.

- 3.6.3. At a local level, the analysis has determined the character of the site and its immediate context to be of **low to medium** value and **medium** susceptibility. Therefore, the site and its immediate context is considered to be **low sensitivity** in landscape terms.



## 4. Baseline Study – Visual

### 4.1. Introduction

- 4.1.1. The Banbury Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment provides an assessment on the visual sensitivity of site I. Some key observations from the assessment that are relevant to this study are:

*The local topography and presence of Banbury to the east limits views into the site from this direction. From the south, views are possible into the valley along Broughton Road although the local horizon south of Withycombe Farm prevents views beyond to the north.*

*The general visibility of the site is medium.*

*The visibility of the site from surrounding areas is low from the adjacent residential area to the east on the edge of Banbury. This is due to the screening provided by the deciduous woodland located on the east boundary of the site at Bretch Hill (along the northern end of Bretch Hill road) and fences and vegetation within the property curtilage of properties bordering the site to the east.*

*There are also limited views into the southern area from Broughton Road. The sensitivity of the surrounding population is medium for the site as a whole.*

*Within the south of the area there is less potential to carry out mitigation although it would be possible in some areas along Broughton Road.*

*There is a medium – low sensitivity to mitigation.*

*The combined visual sensitivity if Site I is medium.*

- 4.1.2. Site visits confirmed that the visibility of the site is consistent with the visual sensitivity described within the Banbury Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment.

### 4.2. Zone of theoretical visibility

- 4.2.1. The desk study identified a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV). This was manually mapped using OS contouring only with no allowances for features such as buildings, walls and vegetation or localised surface deviations.
- 4.2.2. Within the ZTV potential receptors such as roads and Public Rights of Way were identified.
- 4.2.3. Field work was undertaken within the study area in September 2020, April 2021, August 2021 on clear days. The photos of the representative viewpoints provided were all taken in April 2021.
- 4.2.4. During the fieldwork features were identified that screen views such as hedgerows, tree belts, buildings and woodlands. This information was used to refine the ZTV and establish the Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI). The potential nature and magnitude of views within this area was assessed. See Figure 16 for details of the ZTV, ZVI and viewpoints assessed.
- 4.2.5. The landform and vegetation within the study area limits view of the site to within approximately 1.7km of the site.
- 4.2.6. Views from Thornbury Rise in the north are not possible due to the landform which rises up steeply from the road to the site boundary. A ramped footpath takes pedestrians from Thornbury Road up to a playground at the top of the slope.

There are no views into the site from here due to the dense woodland scrub on the northern boundary, which provides an effective landscape buffer.

- 4.2.7. Views from the west are limited by the mature boundary hedgerow and landform beyond. Glimpse views from PRoW 120/24/10 are possible until the landform drops away into the Sor valley. Viewpoint 1 represents views from the west on this route, which are filtered through the boundary vegetation.
- 4.2.8. When entering Banbury from the west on Broughton Road, views are restricted to small glimpses through the boundary vegetation when viewed along the valley. Once closer to the site, these views are blocked by the boundary hedgerows. Viewpoint 2 is representative of views from Broughton Road.
- 4.2.9. Due to the site being located on a south facing steeply sloping valley side, views of the site are possible from the south. Viewpoint 3 is representative of views from Crouch Hill and viewpoint 4 represents views from Friswell Road.
- 4.2.10. From the east views into the site are possible in winter conditions from the parcel of land adjacent to the upper field. Even in winter conditions views are heavily filtered due to the mature trees and vegetation on the shared boundary. In summer conditions vegetation on the shared boundary will prevent views into the site.
- 4.2.11. Viewpoint 5 is representative of views from the east on PRoW 120/24/10. This viewpoint will be blocked once the neighbouring site is developed.
- 4.2.12. The eastern boundary of the lower fields is adjacent to the rear of properties on Balmoral Avenue and Denbigh Close.

From these residential roads and footpaths views into the site are not possible. It is not possible to assess the view from within the homes that back on to the site. However, it is fair to assume that filtered views into the site may be possible through the boundary trees and vegetation from the upstairs windows.

- 4.2.13. In the main, the zone of visual influence is limited to localised views, and therefore potential visual impacts are likely to be similarly limited in their extent.

Representative viewpoints and visual receptors

- 4.2.14. Viewpoints A to G were assessed but found to have no visibility of the site or the Proposed Development. Representative viewpoint photographs of viewpoints A to G can be found in appendix B.
- 4.2.15. Viewpoints 1 to 8 were found to have some visibility of the site or Proposed Development. Agreed representative viewpoint photographs of viewpoints 1 to 8 can be found in appendix C.
- 4.2.16. The visual assessment references the viewpoints mentioned above that are representative of visual receptors in the area. These illustrate views towards the site in the context of the surrounding landscape and are used to inform judgements on impacts for specific receptors.

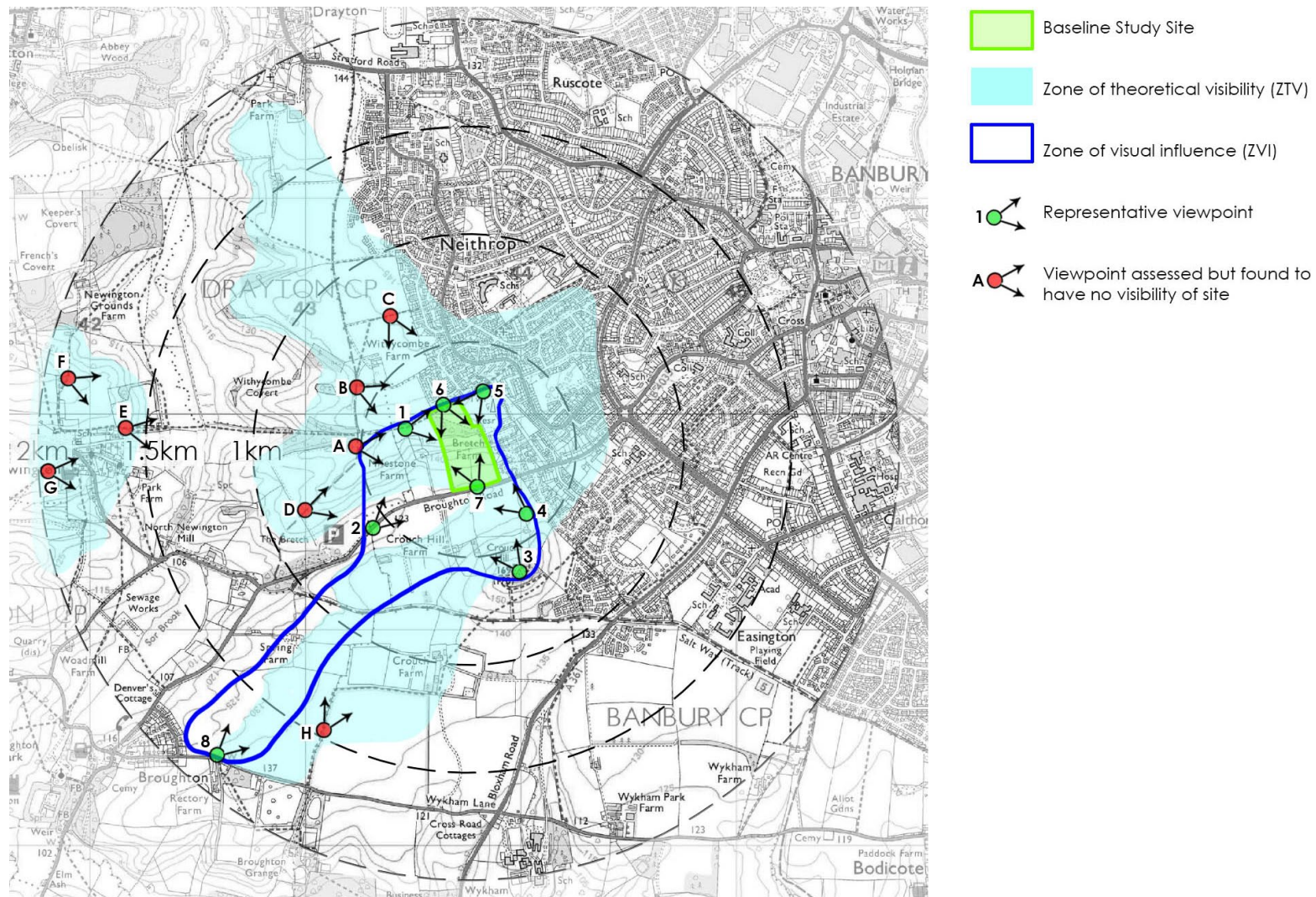


Figure 16: Zone of Theoretical Visibility, Zone of Visual Influence and Viewpoints Assessed



### **4.3. Visual context summary**

4.3.1. Views into the site are restricted from the north, east and west by landform, built form and existing mature trees and hedgerows.

4.3.2. From the south the site is more visually prominent within the local landscape due to its position on a south facing slope however the mature trees and hedgerows on the field boundaries help to filter views into the site.

4.3.3. Viewpoints from Crouch Hill are the longest distance views possible of the site and are likely to see the largest impact. The residential area of Balmoral Avenue can be clearly seen in the view lying to the east of the site. The extant consent to the east of the site, will also be seen in the view and will appear as a continuation of Balmoral Avenue. Thornbury Rise to the north cannot be seen. Therefore, there is no residential 'backdrop' to the site. Subject to mitigation, this could result in the Proposed Development forming an isolated extension of development westwards from the existing urban edge. However, the rising landform south of Thornbury Rise and north of the site contains mature trees that will provide a vegetated backdrop that the Proposed Development will not break.

## 5. Development Proposal and Mitigation

### 5.1. Introduction

- 5.1.1. LVIA is an iterative process which feeds into the planning and design of the project. Therefore, at an early stage the baseline findings of this report were used to inform the design strategy.
- 5.1.2. The likely landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development have played an important part in the evolution of the proposals to ensure a landscape led approach as a primary consideration
- 5.1.3. A pre-application meeting was held with Cherwell District Council to consider the baseline site. Landscape and Visual information was presented and considered during the meeting and a site visit was undertaken.
- 5.1.4. Further to the pre-application meeting advice was followed which led to a reduction in the gross and net areas for Proposed Development under the planning application. This decision took into account the findings of the LVIA baseline information.
- 5.1.5. As a result, the site area was reduced in size from the baseline study area (shown in green in figure 1) to the application site boundary (shown in red in figure 1).
- 5.1.6. The design proposals discussed below and the landscape and visual assessments discussed in chapters 6 and 7 are based upon the application red line boundary site.

### 5.2. Design principles

- 5.2.1. The following principles which were derived from the findings of this report have been used to shape the masterplan proposals. They are proposed to mitigate the potential impacts on the landscape and visual resources:
  - Built development is restricted to the northern parcel of the baseline site. This will adjoin the approved residential development to the east and the existing residential area of Thornbury Drive to the north. The Proposed Development will form a continuation of the settlement pattern of the town to the north.
  - Building heights within the proposed development are a maximum of 2 storeys in height which is considered to be appropriate to the edge of settlement character and will enable the properties to sit comfortably within the existing landscape structure.
  - All boundary hedgerows and trees are to be retained. The retention of the hedgerow running east-west across the southern boundary of the main development area will help to mitigate the visual impact of views from the south. The structure of the site and historic field pattern will also be retained.
  - The site access will be from the neighbouring approved residential development. This will prevent the need for an access off Broughton Road therefore maintaining the continuous significant boundary hedgerow on the southern boundary.

- The majority of the area of woodland scrub that wraps around the west, north and east boundaries of the northern field is maintained. This will ensure the landscape structure of the site is retained.
  - Additional tree planting and planting to be proposed within the Proposed Development, particularly around the boundaries. This will reinforce and enhance the existing strong boundary landscape features. It will also add an extra layer of vegetation between the development and the viewpoints identified, helping to mitigate for the impacts found.
  - The development envelope has been restricted to a central area, allowing opportunity for significant landscape zones to the boundaries of the development. This provides extra landscape mitigation for viewpoints from all directions in addition to that already provided by the existing landscape structure. It also provides a softening of the edge of the settlement which is currently harsh creating a better transition from the urban to the rural characters.
  - The wooded character of PRoW 120/24/10 is retained and enhanced through additional woodland planting on the northern boundary. Development has been intentionally set back further from this boundary to retain the amenity of the PRoW.
  - The setting back of development from the northern boundary and the additional landscaping proposed will ensure the development does not sit on an exposed ridge by providing a landscape backdrop particularly when viewed from the south.
  - The proposed landscaping along the southern boundary of the Proposed Development serves to strengthen the existing site hedgerow where there are weaker points. This strengthens the landscape mitigation when viewed from the south.
  - A continuous informal route is provided within the landscape zone around the perimeter of the development. This will improve the recreation quality of the site.
  - The development has been designed to respond to the guidelines for the landscape strategy for the Farmland Plateau landscape type. The Proposed development is located alongside the existing settlement, the field pattern is retained and strengthened using native species and the scale and siting of the Proposed Development is sensitive to its elevated position.
- 5.2.2. These principles have been developed to ensure that the development responds to the landscape and visual context and incorporates appropriate mitigation measures. They were used to inform the Illustrative Masterplan prepared by Intelligent Residential Design shown in figure 17.
- 5.2.3. The Illustrative Landscape Masterplan (drawing numbers 20-140\_103 AND 104) are submitted separately and are shown in figures 18 and 19.





Figure 17: Concept Masterplan prepared by Intelligent Residential Design



Figure 18: Illustrative Landscape Masterplan – Entire Site







## **6. Assessment of landscape effects**

### **6.1. Introduction**

- 6.1.1. The landscape effects have been assessed against the outcomes of the landscape baseline study. Effects have been assessed in consideration of landscape fabric and character.
- 6.1.2. Regard has been made to sensitivities as identified in planning context, as to overall visions for the area for protection against unsuitable development, to ensure any mitigation proposals seek to adhere to strategic aims and preserve the qualities for the area.
- 6.1.3. The key national and local landscape character areas identified in chapter 3, have been used as landscape receptors, to allow a clear assessment of effects of the Proposed Development.

### **6.2. Effects on landscape fabric**

- 6.2.1. All existing boundary hedgerows and trees are retained within the Proposed Development.
- 6.2.2. In addition, the majority of the woodland scrub that wraps around the west, north and east boundaries of the northern field is also retained. These areas of woodland are enhanced through the planting of significant areas of native woodland thicket along the north, east and west boundaries.
- 6.2.3. Alongside these areas of proposed woodland thicket are swathes of wildflower meadow within which groups of extra-heavy standard trees are proposed.
- 6.2.4.

- 6.2.5. The retention and enhancement of the existing boundary vegetation not only maintains the existing field pattern and the landscape structure of the site but also increases the quantity and quality of the landscape fabric.
- 6.2.6. The open arable land in the northern field will be lost due to the Proposed Development, which is a permanent change to the fabric of the site.
- 6.2.7. The development of the site will have a negligible effect on the baseline topographical characteristics of the site.
- 6.2.8. The Conservation Areas of Banbury, North Newington and Drayton are generally located more than 1km from the site and have no inter-relationship with the site. There are no other landscape designations within the study area. Therefore, the Proposed Development will not have any impact on any designated landscapes.
- 6.2.9. The closest listed building to the site is Withycombe Farm. Properties on Thornbury Drive are located between the site and the farm and are therefore closer to the farm than the Proposed Development. The retention and enhancement of the boundary vegetation on the northern and western boundaries will mitigate any impact on the setting of the listed building.
- 6.2.10. Crouch Farmhouse (Grade II listed) lies approximately 1km southwest of the site. The Proposed Development is considered to be outside of the immediate setting of the farmhouse due to the intervening landform, roads and vegetation. Therefore, the Proposed Development will have no impact on the setting of the listed building.

- 6.2.11. The retention and enhancement of the woodland scrub in the north of the site will result in there being no impact on the fabric of PRoW 120/24/10, which passes through the site.
- 6.2.12. There will be no impact on the fabric of any PRoW within the study area.
- 6.2.13. A new site access will be created from the neighbouring approved residential development, which will result in the loss of a section of vegetation and a tree on the eastern boundary. This represents a small impact on the landscape fabric due to the creation of a break in the otherwise continuous vegetation on the site boundaries however this loss is more than mitigated by the proposed landscaping.
- 6.2.14. The sensitivity of the landscape fabric is **moderate**. The magnitude of the impacts on the landscape fabric is considered to be **negligible**. Therefore, in accordance with table 7 of the methodology the significance of the impact on the landscape fabric is **negligible**.

### **6.3. Effects on landscape character**

#### National

- 6.3.1. The site is located within NCA 95: Northamptonshire Uplands. The assessment found the site to be consistent with three of the key characteristics of the area and as such is making a small contribution to its character.
- 6.3.2. The development of the site will have a negligible effect on the baseline geological, hydrological and topographical characteristics of NCA 95.
- 6.3.3. The rectangular enclosed field pattern, which is characteristic of NCA 95 will remain recognisable due to the retention of all boundary vegetation.
- 6.3.4. The protection and management of the existing field pattern contributes to the aims of SEO1 for NCA 95.
- 6.3.5. The change in character of the northern parcel from arable farmland to residential development will be a permanent change in this very localised area.
- 6.3.6. Due to the very small scale of the site within the vast area of the NCA 95 the magnitude of the character impact is negligible.
- 6.3.7. NCA 117 has a **moderate** sensitivity, and the magnitude of the impact is **negligible** therefore in accordance with table 7 of the methodology the significance of the impact on NCA 95: Northamptonshire Uplands is **negligible**.

#### District

#### Farmland Plateau

- 6.3.8. The assessment found the site to be consistent with two of the five key characteristics of the Farmland Plateau character area and as such is making a small contribution to its character.
- 6.3.9. The topography of the site will remain largely as existing, and the regular pattern of fields enclosed by thorn hedges that are characteristic of the area will be retained.
- 6.3.10. The change in character of the northern parcel from arable farmland to residential development will be a permanent in this very localised area.

- 6.3.11. The guidelines for achieving the landscape strategy for the Farmland Plateau character area have been considered during the design process.
- 6.3.12. In accordance with the guidelines the Proposed Development is located alongside the existing settlement. It is small in scale and located within an enclosed land parcel ensuring the remainder of the landscape type retains its open character.
- 6.3.13. The significant zones of proposed native woodland planting and groups of large stature trees will help to strengthen the field pattern.
- 6.3.14. The Proposed Development is located adjacent to existing residential areas and is in-line with the settlement pattern to the north. Residential areas to the north of the site extend further westwards than the proposed development. It will therefore appear as a continuation of the existing settlement.
- 6.3.15. Due to the small scale of the site within the much wider area of the Farmland Plateau the magnitude of the character impact is very small.
- 6.3.16. The district character area has a **medium** sensitivity, and the magnitude of the impact is **very small** therefore in accordance with table 7 of the methodology the significance of the impact on the Farmland Plateau character area is **minor adverse**.

Local

- 6.3.17. The natural heritage assets of the site are the boundary hedgerows and trees. These boundary features are being retained and enhanced. The planting and trees proposed

around the site boundaries will maintain and enhance the existing landscape structure of the site.

- 6.3.18. The condition of the existing site is considered to be fair. The condition of the site will improve due to the increased maintenance the landscape features will receive once the site is developed. Once the site is developed, regular landscape maintenance will ensure a long-term future for the proposed and existing planting.
- 6.3.19. The site is located on the settlement edge and is influenced by this. Development of the site will extend the settlement edge in this localised setting. However, the retained and proposed landscape will ensure the site provides a transition from the urban to the rural settings. The wide vegetated boundaries will create a softer settlement edge than that currently found.
- 6.3.20. The Proposed Development will be a permanent change in character of the central grassland area of the site from agricultural to residential. This will reduce the level of tranquillity and wildness in this very localised setting which is already influenced by the adjacent residential character.
- 6.3.21. PRoW 120/24/10 provides the only recreational opportunity on site. The PRoW will be retained and the woodland scrub through which it passes is also retained. The woodland scrub provides this section of the route with a distinct wooded character, which will be preserved.
- 6.3.22. The local character has a **low** sensitivity, and the magnitude of the impact is **negligible** therefore in accordance with table 7 of the methodology the significance of the impact on the local character setting is **negligible**.



## 7. Assessment of visual effects

### 7.1. Introduction

- 7.1.1. The assessment of the visual impact has been made through the analysis of the representative viewpoints taken around the ZTV.
- 7.1.2. The LVIA process and potential visibility have been key factors in influencing the layout of the Proposed Development. Visual connections to the landscape have been analysed and the masterplan tailored to ensure the development presents well and mitigates as far as possible any negative visual impacts.

### 7.2. Viewpoint assessments

- 7.2.1. Viewpoints A to G represent viewpoints that were checked during field work. Views of the existing site and the Proposed Development were found to not be possible from these locations and they were not taken forward to assessment. Representative photographs of these viewpoints can be found in appendix B.
- 7.2.2. Viewpoints 1 to 8 were checked on site and found to have some visibility of the site or Proposed Development. Representative photographs of these viewpoints can be found in appendix C and assessment of each viewpoint is below.

#### Viewpoint 1

- 7.2.3. **Description:** The viewpoint is taken from PROW 120/24/10 within the neighbouring field to the west of the site, which is open grassland, looking east.

- 7.2.4. **Visual receptors/sensitivity:** Users of PROW 120/24/10. The view is from a public right of way where the view is part of the wider experience. In accordance with table 3 of the methodology the sensitivity level is **high**.
- 7.2.5. **Existing view:** The view looks east across a field in pastoral use towards the shared field boundary on the western boundary of the site. The foreground is grassland, which is gently sloping southwards here, before starting to slope more steeply in the right-hand side of the view.
- 7.2.6. Mature trees and hedgerow make up the left-hand side of the view, which prevent any further views in this direction.
- 7.2.7. Ahead the field boundary consists of mature trees and hedgerow which form a dense block, preventing any views into the neighbouring land or beyond.
- 7.2.8. In the far right of the view the landform slopes steeply and the field boundary disappears from view.
- 7.2.9. **Description and Magnitude of change:** Views into the northern section of the site are screened and filtered by existing mature vegetation on the boundary. However, the upper portion of dwellings in the Proposed Development may be possible above the hedgerow.
- 7.2.10. Views are not possible into the lower section of the site due to landform.
- 7.2.11. In accordance with table 6 of the methodology, the magnitude of change is **very small**.

7.2.12. **Effect:** In accordance with table 7 of the methodology, the **high** sensitivity of the receptors combined with a **very small** magnitude of change represents a **moderate adverse impact**.

7.2.13. **Effect after 15 years:** The proposed woodland and tree planting between the western boundary and the development will be maturing. It may be possible to see the proposed planting, particularly in areas where the existing boundary vegetation is currently lower or thinner. This will enhance the screening effect of the existing boundary. The magnitude is likely to reduce to **negligible** which will result in a **negligible impact** at 15 years.

#### Viewpoint 2

7.2.14. **Description:** Viewpoint 2 is taken from Broughton Road looking east on the approach into Banbury.

7.2.15. **Visual receptors/sensitivity:** Users of Broughton Road which is a functional main road through a rural area and as such journeys are not generally tourism related. In accordance with table 3 of the methodology the sensitivity level is **moderate**.

7.2.16. **Existing view:** The view looks east along the Broughton Road and has a character of a typical main road through a rural area. The road has grass verges on both sides and well-maintained native hedgerows form boundaries between the roads and the neighbouring farmland beyond.

7.2.17. The south facing steep valley side can be seen on the left-hand side of the road. Field boundaries running up the sloping ground filter views into the fields. Filtered views of the site are possible through the intervening vegetation, which is likely to offer more screening in summer months.

7.2.18. At the top of the slope a telecommunications mast is a prominent feature in the landscape.

7.2.19. **Description and Magnitude of change:** Filtered views of the proposed properties may be possible within the tree structure of the view. However, the retention of the existing field boundaries coupled with the proposed landscaping on the western boundary will result in views of the Proposed Development being heavily filtered from this location.

7.2.20. Street lighting within the Proposed Development will be seen as a new feature within the view at night.

7.2.21. The character of the view will remain largely unchanged. The Proposed Development will not change the overall composition of this view.

7.2.22. In accordance with table 6 of the methodology, the magnitude of change is **very small**.

7.2.23. **Effect:** In accordance with table 7 of the methodology, the **moderate** sensitivity of the receptors combined with a **very small** magnitude of change represents a **minor adverse impact**.

7.2.24. **Effect after 15 years:** The proposed woodland and tree planting between the western boundary and the development will be maturing. The effect of the planting will create a denser boundary screen to the development from this distance and angle. The magnitude is likely to reduce to **negligible** which will reduce the impact to **negligible** after 15 years.

### Viewpoint 3

7.2.25. **Description:** Viewpoint 3 is taken from the viewpoint on the top of Crouch Hill looking north across the valley.

7.2.26. **Visual receptors/sensitivity:** Users of the network of PRow on Crouch Hill. The view is from a recreational area where the view is part of the wider experience. In accordance with table 3 of the methodology the sensitivity level is **high**.

7.2.27. **Existing view:** The viewpoint is taken from the top of Crouch Hill looking north. In the foreground of the view are the agricultural fields found on the lower slopes of Crouch Hill. The field boundaries are marked by native hedgerows which cross the foreground of the view from left to right.

7.2.28. Broughton Road crosses the centre of the view but is not visible in the summer months due to the intervening dense field boundaries.

7.2.29. Properties in Balmoral Avenue are clearly visible in the right-hand side of the view. Beyond these a water tower and telecommunication mast are prominent features. These urban features give the view an edge of settlement character.

7.2.30. Views into the main development area of the site are heavily restricted by the trees within the internal field boundaries.

7.2.31. Open farmland continues to the left of the site through which the field boundaries continue in the same pattern. The buildings of Milestone Farm can be seen in the left-hand side of the view.

7.2.32. The view is far reaching with the horizon being formed by distant hills.

7.2.33. **Description and Magnitude of change:** The foreground of the view looking across the fields towards Broughton Road will remain unchanged.

7.2.34. The view across to the fields on the lower slopes will remain largely unchanged. The attenuation pond in the southwest corner of the site may be partially visible behind the hedgerow on the southern boundary. However, the pond edge and area surrounding the pond will be seeded with a wildflower mix which will help to assimilate it into its surroundings.

7.2.35. The extant consented residential development to the east of the site will be seen within this viewpoint. The Proposed Development will sit alongside this as a continuation of the settlement westwards.

7.2.36. The proposed properties will be visible however the view will be filtered through the existing and proposed tree structure which will help to filter the appearance of the development, particularly in summer months.

7.2.37. Street lighting within the Proposed Development will be a new feature within the view during hours of darkness. However, this will be viewed alongside existing lighting in Balmoral Avenue and future lighting on the neighbouring approved application site. The nature of the PRow from which the viewpoint is taken means it is likely to be used infrequently during hours of darkness.

7.2.38. The Proposed Development will sit within the existing landscape structure in the more distant part of the view. The lower slopes which make up the centre of the view will remain largely unchanged.



In accordance with table 6 of the methodology, the magnitude of change is **small**.

7.2.39. **Effect:** In accordance with table 7 of the methodology, the **high** sensitivity of the receptors combined with a **small** magnitude of change represents a **moderate to major adverse impact**.

7.2.40. **Effect after 15 years:** The proposed woodland and tree planting within the Proposed Development will be maturing. The effect of the planting will create a denser landscape structure to the site. The landscape enhancements on the southern boundary will improve the screening qualities of the retained existing hedgerow and trees. The magnitude is likely to reduce to **very small** which will reduce the impact to **moderate adverse** after 15 years.

#### Viewpoint 4

7.2.41. **Description:** Viewpoint 4 is taken from Friswell Road looking northwest across the valley.

7.2.42. **Visual receptors/sensitivity:** Residents and users of Friswell Road. The view is representative of possible oblique views from residential properties therefore in accordance with table 3 of the methodology the sensitivity level is **moderate to high**.

7.2.43. **Existing view:** Friswell Road is part of a recently completed residential development on the edge of Banbury. Houses on this road face west onto neighbouring farmland and have an oblique view of the site. The houses and road with streetlighting form the foreground in the right-hand side of the view. On the left-hand side of the road is a dense mixed native hedgerow, which limits views into the farmland beyond.

7.2.44. On the opposite side of the valley properties on Balmoral Avenue can be seen in the distance in the right-hand side of the view. The well-established trees and hedgerow that form the boundary between Balmoral Avenue and the site can be clearly seen running up the valley slope.

7.2.45. Views into the northern portion of the site are restricted by the intervening trees and vegetation.

7.2.46. Filtered and glimpsed views are possible into the lower slopes of the site through the intervening vegetation.

7.2.47. **Description and Magnitude of change:** The foreground of the view will remain unchanged.

7.2.48. In winter conditions it may be possible to see the upper portion and roofs of the proposed properties sat within the tree structure at the top of the slope.

7.2.49. The glow from street lighting within the Proposed Development will be viewed in dark conditions within the tree structure on the upper slope.

7.2.50. In accordance with table 6 of the methodology, the magnitude of change is **very small**.

7.2.51. **Effect:** In accordance with table 7 of the methodology, the **moderate to high** sensitivity of the receptors combined with a **very small** magnitude of change represents a **minor to moderate adverse impact**.

7.2.52. **Effect after 15 years:** The proposed woodland and tree planting on the southern and eastern boundaries of the Proposed Development will be maturing. The effect of the planting will create a denser boundary screen to the

development from this distance and angle. The roofs of properties on the site may still be visible above the landscape structure however the magnitude of the effect is likely to reduce to **negligible** which will reduce the impact to **negligible** after 15 years.

#### Viewpoint 5

- 7.2.53. **Description:** Viewpoint 5 is taken from PRoW 120/24/10 looking west towards the shared boundary.
- 7.2.54. **Visual receptors/sensitivity:** Users of PRoW 120/24/10. The view is from a PRoW where the view is part of wider experience. In accordance with table 3 of the methodology the sensitivity level is **high**.
- 7.2.55. **Existing view:** The view looks across the flat area of grassland/scrub of the neighbouring field towards the trees and vegetation on the boundary which is shared with the site.
- 7.2.56. There is a sudden, obvious change in level close to the boundary. The slope and land on top of the slope are vegetated with native shrubs and large stature mature trees.
- 7.2.57. The boundary vegetation heavily filters views into the site even in winter conditions. In summer conditions it is likely that views into the site are not possible.
- 7.2.58. This neighbouring field, from which the viewpoint is taken has been granted outline planning permission for a residential development for 49 dwellings. Once developed the existing view will be permanently changed. There will be properties between the viewpoint and the site boundary. Views of the site may not be possible from here once this site is developed.

- 7.2.59. **Description and Magnitude of change:** This viewpoint is taken from within the neighbouring site to the east which has consent to be developed for housing. Therefore, once developed this view will not be possible due to the built form between the viewpoint and the site.

- 7.2.60. In accordance with table 6 of the methodology, the magnitude of change is **negligible**.

- 7.2.61. **Effect:** In accordance with table 7 of the methodology, the **high** sensitivity of the receptors combined with a **negligible** magnitude of change represents a **negligible impact**.

- 7.2.62. **Effect after 15 years:** Due to the consented intervening residential development between the viewpoint and the site views of the site will not be possible from this location. Therefore, the impact will remain **negligible** after 15 years.

#### Viewpoint 6

- 7.2.63. **Description:** Viewpoint 6 is taken from PRoW 120/24/10 (within the site) looking south.
- 7.2.64. **Visual receptors/sensitivity:** Users of PRoW 120/24/10. The view is from a PRoW where the view is part of wider experience. In accordance with table 3 of the methodology the sensitivity level is **high**.
- 7.2.65. **Existing view:** The PRoW passes through a dense area of woodland scrub which is continuous along the northern part of the site. Views out are therefore very limited. However, in winter months it is possible to get small glimpses into the open part of the site through the trees.

7.2.66. **Description and Magnitude of change:** The foreground of the view will remain unchanged due to the retention of the existing woodland scrub.

7.2.67. A second layer of woodland will be added between the existing scrub and the development which will further help to filter views of the Proposed Development.

7.2.68. In winter conditions filtered views of the Proposed Development may be possible through the tree structure however these will be heavily filtered.

7.2.69. In accordance with table 6 of the methodology, the magnitude of change is **negligible**.

7.2.70. **Effect:** In accordance with table 7 of the methodology, the **high** sensitivity of the receptors combined with a **negligible** magnitude of change represents a **negligible impact**.

7.2.71. **Effect after 15 years:** The proposed woodland and tree planting on the northern boundary between the viewpoint and the Proposed Development will be maturing. The effect of the planting will create a dense boundary screen to the development from here. The width of the woodland planted buffer between the viewpoint and the development, and its size after 15 years will mean that views of the Proposed Development are no longer possible from this location. The magnitude of the effect is likely to reduce to **no change** which will reduce the impact to **no change** after 15 years.

#### Viewpoint 7

7.2.72. **Description:** Viewpoint 7 is taken from Broughton Road on the site boundary looking north.

7.2.73. **Visual receptors/sensitivity:** Users of Broughton Road both in vehicles and pedestrians using the pavement. In accordance with table 3 of the methodology the sensitivity level is **moderate**.

7.2.74. **Existing view:** The view looks over the field gate, which is the only break in the otherwise continuous hedge along the roadside in this location.

7.2.75. The view looks up the sloping fields that formed the southern portion of the baseline site. A field boundary can be seen directly in front of the viewpoint in the centre of the view, it continues up the slope.

7.2.76. Field boundaries cross the centre of the view. On the right-hand side this field boundary is reasonably dense and heavily filters views of the land further up the slope. On the left-hand side the field boundary is very 'gappy' and views into the next field up the slope are possible.

7.2.77. Beyond the next field the hedgerow and trees that form the southern boundary of the development are seen, which appear to be the top of the slope from this location.

7.2.78. In the far right-hand side of the view properties on Balmoral Avenue can be seen.

7.2.79. The mobile phone mast can be seen above the trees in the right-hand side of the view.

7.2.80. Electricity pylons can be seen running down the slope in the left-hand side of the view.

7.2.81. **Description and Magnitude of change:** The foreground and middle ground of the view will remain unchanged. The



drainage works proposed on this slope would only be visible from this location where they pass through the upper field in the left-hand side of the view. However, these works will be reinstated with a grass mix and will have no impact on this viewpoint.

7.2.82. The existing fields boundaries in the view will be retained. The upper boundaries running across the view will form the southern boundary of the development and will be enhanced with additional planting and trees. These features will form a layering effect which will serve to restrict views of the Proposed Development from this location.

7.2.83. It will be possible to see the upper portion of the row of housing proposed in the south of the site. Beyond this the properties will not be seen due to the landform changing and becoming less steep.

7.2.84. In accordance with table 6 of the methodology, the magnitude of change is **very small**.

7.2.85. **Effect:** In accordance with table 7 of the methodology, the **moderate** sensitivity of the receptors combined with a **very small** magnitude of change represents a **minor adverse impact**.

7.2.86. **Effect after 15 years:** The proposed planting on the southern boundary between the viewpoint and the Proposed Development will be maturing. The effect of the planting will create a layered boundary screen to the development from here. After 15 years will mean that views of the Proposed Development are reduced from this location. The magnitude of the effect is likely to reduce to **negligible** which will reduce the impact to **negligible** after 15 years.

#### Viewpoint 8

7.2.87. **Description:** Viewpoint 8 is taken from Wykam Lane 1.65km from the site looking northeast.

7.2.88. **Visual receptors/sensitivity:** Users of Wykam Lane. In accordance with table 3 of the methodology the sensitivity level is **moderate**.

7.2.89. **Existing view:** The view looks over the field gate, which is the only break in the otherwise continuous hedge along the roadside in this location.

7.2.90. The view looks across open and fairly flat farmland in the foreground of the view. Beyond this, across the centre of the view the land rises to the north.

7.2.91. Fields boundaries and woodland plantations can be seen through the view which has a rural/agricultural character. Crouch Hill Farm can be clearly seen in the centre of the view.

7.2.92. The mobile phone mast close to the site can be seen on the horizon in the centre of the view. This is the only 'urban' feature in the otherwise rural view.

7.2.93. **Description and Magnitude of change:** The majority of the view will remain unchanged.

7.2.94. The Proposed Development is located within the tree structure at the top of the slope in the centre of the view. The retention of the tree structure and the addition of the proposed planting will mean that views of the Proposed Development are heavily restricted. In summer months, views of the Proposed Development from this distance are likely to be blocked. In winter months it may be possible to see the

upper portion of the properties however this will be filtered by tree canopies.

7.2.95. Due to the distance from the site, the small scale of the Proposed Development and the retention and enhancement of the existing landscape structure in accordance with table 6 of the methodology, the magnitude of change is **negligible**.

7.2.96. **Effect:** In accordance with table 7 of the methodology, the **moderate** sensitivity of the receptors combined with a **negligible** magnitude of change represents a **negligible impact**.

7.2.97. **Effect after 15 years:** The proposed planting within the Proposed Development will be maturing. The effect of the planting will create a layered boundary screen to the development from here. After 15 years will mean that views of the Proposed Development are reduced from this location. However due to the angle of the view it may still be possible to see the roofs of houses behind the tree structure and the magnitude of the effect is likely to remain **negligible** which will result in a **negligible** impact after 15 years. Beyond 15 years, once the proposed structural planting has reached full maturity, views of the Proposed Development from this location are unlikely to be possible.

## 8. Conclusions

- 8.1.1. The 3.15 hectare site lies on the western edge of Banbury, north of Broughton Road and close to an area known as Bretch Hill.
- 8.1.2. The baseline study site comprised a sloping group of four fields currently in arable use, fringed by hedges and mature trees.
- 8.1.3. As a result of the baseline study and pre-application discussions with Cherwell District Council the baseline study site was reduced in area. The application site excludes much of the three lower three fields. The Proposed Development is predominantly focused on the northern field.
- 8.1.4. The Proposed Development will comprise a residential development of up to 49 dwellings, public open space, and associated infrastructure.
- 8.1.5. The design and layout of the Proposed Development is sensitive to the existing character and integrates the natural site features. It responds sensitively to its position on the edge of the settlement in order to accord with the planning policies listed in section 2.
- 8.1.6. The site is consistent with three of the eight key characteristics of NCA 117, two of the five characteristics of the Farmland Plateau character area. It is therefore making a limited contribution to the character of the area within which it is found.
- 8.1.7. The Farmland Plateau character area is described as having an elevated and exposed character with long-distance open views. The northern portion of the site, where the development is proposed is elevated however the tall and dense vegetation creates a feeling of enclosure rather than exposure. Long distance views are not possible from the site.
- 8.1.8. The retention and management of the hedgerows, trees and woodland scrub found on the site boundaries is in accordance with the guidelines for achieving the landscape strategy for the Farmland Plateau character area.
- 8.1.9. Views of the site are limited to within 1km of the site. The landform, builtform and existing boundary trees and vegetation on the site and within the surrounding area effectively screen views into the site from the north, west and east, even in winter conditions.
- 8.1.10. The largest visual impact was found from viewpoint 3 at Crouch Hill. This viewpoint was found to have a moderate to major negative impact at day 1 reducing to a moderate impact after 15 years.
- 8.1.11. The view of the Proposed Development has been limited as much as possible from Crouch Hill viewing point by locating the proposed properties within the upper field. The retained and proposed vegetation on the southern site boundary will filter views into the developed part of the site.
- 8.1.12. The foreground and middle ground of the view will remain largely unchanged. The Proposed Development will be noticeable as a new feature within the view. However, the Proposed Development will sit comfortably within the landscape structure and will not break the horizon of the view as the existing vegetation to the north of the site is retained and will remain visible.

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- 8.1.13. The proposed landscape mitigation planting and the subsequent maintenance of the landscape will improve the condition of the landscape features of the site. Regular landscape maintenance will ensure a long-term future for the proposed and existing planting.
- 8.1.14. The appropriate development of the site that includes the principles as set out in section 5 will ensure that the Proposed Development respects the landscape and visual context of the wider landscape.
- 8.1.15. The retention and enhancement of the existing landscape structure to the boundaries helps to maintain the character of the site as much as possible and reflects the heritage of the site.
- 8.1.16. The retained and enhanced important natural features of the site will also enhance biodiversity, create wildlife corridors and help to integrate the development into its setting.
- 8.1.17. The strategy for the site demonstrates that there is the opportunity to provide a residential development in this location.
- 8.1.18. A sensitively designed layout would allow the Proposed Development to integrate well into the existing landscape character and help to mitigate the impact on the viewpoints identified.



## **Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment**

Land off Balmoral Avenue, Banbury, Oxfordshire  
Ref: 20\_140\_LVIA\_R01C

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## **Appendix A: Survey Methodology**

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## **Introduction**

The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is produced in accordance with the following publications and guidelines:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3, Landscape Institute & Institute of Environmental Management, published in 2013 (GLVIA3)
- An approach to Landscape Character Assessment, Natural England, published October 2014
- Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19 – Visual Representation of Development Proposals, published in 2019
- Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21 – Assessing landscape value outside national designations, published in 2021

In accordance with the guidance the following components are required:

- Project description
- Baseline studies
- Identification and description of the effects

In addition to these key components to further the depth of the study the report will also review the following components:

- Site selection
- Significance of the effects
- Mitigation

## **Baseline study**

A baseline study is undertaken to first establish the inherent value of the site area in terms of landscape and visual significance. This will be a culmination of the following factors:

- Site specific characteristics and resources
- Character of the setting
- Landscape value

## Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Land off Balmoral Avenue, Banbury, Oxfordshire  
Ref: 20\_140\_LVIA\_R01C

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- - Landscape susceptibility
  - Landscape sensitivity

The baseline study is undertaken by using a combination of both desktop and field assessment.

**Desktop assessment:** Reviewing the following (not exclusively):

- National/ regional designations
- Planning policy
- Ordnance survey data
- Aerial photography
- Cycle/ footpath networks

The desktop study of the site will refer to the following (not exclusively):

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Natural England Landscape Character Areas
- The Cherwell Local Plan 2011 - 2031

**Fieldwork assessment:** exploring the gathered data and developing the general information into a site-specific analysis which will be used to assess the value of the landscape as a resource.

The fieldwork will also establish all the areas from where the development could be seen and the different groups of people who may experience the views (receptors). Once established, a range of representative viewpoints will be used to analyse the significance of the impact of the development from its surroundings.

Photographs of general views of the site and surrounding area are taken using a digital SLR camera with standard 35mm lens.

Photographs for representative viewpoints are taken in accordance with Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19, using a digital SLR camera with a 50mm fixed lens, 1.6m above ground level and a GPS location recorded. For many of the views a panoramic is used to show the full field of view with several photographs stitched together using Adobe Photoshop.

### **Landscape Sensitivity**

Landscape sensitivity relates to the extent that a landscape feature or area can 'accept change of a particular type and scale without unacceptable adverse effects on its character.'

The GLVIA3 identifies sensitivity as a combination of the 'value of the receptor' and the 'susceptibility of the receptor to a specific type of change or development'.

The susceptibility to change relates to the ability of the Application Site to 'accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategy'.

The findings of the baseline landscape studies of landscape fabric and landscape character combined with professional judgement will inform the assessments of the landscape value and landscape susceptibility.

The following table sets out the criteria that have been considered for determining landscape value. These are informed by GLVIA3 (Box 5.1)



Table 1: Criteria for assessing landscape value

LANDSCAPE VALUE	DESCRIPTION
High	<p>Lies within or contains elements of a designated areas at an International or National level e.g World Heritage Site, National Park, AONB.</p> <p><b>Natural and cultural heritage</b> - forms part of the setting for internationally important historical buildings or cultural features. Landscape has strong historical and cultural associations. Provides a setting for Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens or nationally important historical/cultural features. The landscape contains elements that have prominent historical and cultural associations.</p> <p><b>Landscape condition</b> – a high quality landscape containing high quality and sometimes rare examples of key landscape characteristic features.</p> <p><b>Landscape associations</b> - may be recognised at a national scale.</p> <p><b>Distinctiveness</b> - the landscape reflects a strong sense of identity.</p> <p><b>Recreational opportunities</b> - Provides a nationally important recreational resource or attraction or Provides well used recreational facilities and attractions for locals and visitors.</p> <p><b>Perceptual (scenic) qualities</b> - forms part of the attractive views/scenic quality representative of the designated or highly valued landscape. Contains important or distinctive landscape features or is important in recognised views.</p> <p><b>Perceptual (wildness, tranquillity) qualities</b> – a tranquil, remote or rural landscape with minimal influence from human activity</p> <p><b>Functional</b> - elements of the landscape make a strong contribution to a clearly identifiable landscape function.</p>

## Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Land off Balmoral Avenue, Banbury, Oxfordshire  
Ref: 20\_140\_LVIA\_R01C

LANDSCAPE VALUE	DESCRIPTION
Medium	<p>Lies adjacent to a designated landscape or feature, or within a designation which is subject to some degradation. Lies within a landscape identified as important to local character or features.</p> <p><b>Natural and cultural heritage</b> - contains some local historic and cultural associations.</p> <p><b>Landscape condition</b> - moderate quality landscape or features. Some management of the whole or significant features evident.</p> <p><b>Landscape associations</b> - may be understood in the local context.</p> <p><b>Distinctiveness</b> - the landscape reflects a common sense of identity.</p> <p><b>Recreational opportunities</b> - provides a well-used recreational resource or attraction for local residents.</p> <p><b>Perceptual (scenic) qualities</b> - are considered as ordinary.</p> <p><b>Perceptual (wildness, tranquillity) qualities</b> – background influenced by transport networks or noise pollution, some human activity which can impact upon the potential tranquillity.</p> <p><b>Functional</b> - Elements of the landscape make a fair contribution to a clearly identifiable landscape function.</p>

## Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Land off Balmoral Avenue, Banbury, Oxfordshire  
Ref: 20\_140\_LVIA\_R01C

LANDSCAPE VALUE	DESCRIPTION
Low	<p>Does not lie within or influence a designated or protected landscape or feature. but a landscape of local relevance (e.g public open spaces, village greens or allotments) and also green infrastructure and open spaces within residential areas likely to be visited and valued by the local community.</p> <p><b>Natural and cultural heritage</b> - Historical and cultural associations are discreet or do not relate to the landscape.</p> <p><b>Landscape condition</b> - An ordinary low-quality landscape, structurally poor with features in a degraded or damaged condition. Certain elements maybe worthy of conservation and enhancement, currently minimal management. Areas that are devoid or contain minimal examples of important features, experiences and views.</p> <p><b>Landscape associations</b> – Very few or no landscape associations or highly localised associations</p> <p><b>Distinctiveness</b> - The landscape reflects a generic sense of identity.</p> <p><b>Recreational opportunities</b> - Provides some informal recreational use of limited access. #</p> <p><b>Perceptual (scenic) qualities</b> - Are considered as poor.</p> <p><b>Perceptual (wildness, tranquillity) qualities</b> - Heavily influenced by major transport networks, noise pollution and moderate or intermittent human activity.</p> <p><b>Functional</b> - Elements of the landscape make a limited contribution to a clearly identifiable landscape function.</p>

The following table sets out the criteria that have been considered for determining landscape susceptibility.

Table 2: Criteria for assessing landscape susceptibility

SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE	DESCRIPTION
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• there is no or little similar development present in the landscape; and or</li><li>• there is limited or no screening or backgrounding by landform, woodland, and or built form; and or</li><li>• the landscape cannot accommodate the proposed development without suffering detrimental effects on its character.</li></ul>
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• there is some similar development present in the landscape; and or</li><li>• there is some screening or backgrounding by landform, woodland, and or built form; and or</li><li>• the landscape is generally able to accommodate the proposed development without suffering detrimental effects on its character.</li></ul>
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• there is large scale development of a similar nature present in the landscape; and or</li><li>• there is screening or backgrounding by landform, woodland, and or built form; and or</li><li>• the landscape is able to accommodate the proposed development without suffering detrimental effects on its character.</li></ul>

Detailed consideration is given to the contributing factors to landscape value and the susceptibility of the site and surrounding area to the type of the development proposed. Conclusions on landscape sensitivity are drawn using professional judgement to balance the assessment on value and susceptibility.

Judgements on sensitivity are described as very high, high, medium, low or negligible.



## Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Land off Balmoral Avenue, Banbury, Oxfordshire  
Ref: 20\_140\_LVIA\_R01C

### Visual sensitivity

The following table is used to assess the sensitivity of views and visual amenity:

Table 3: Visual Sensitivity Criteria

SENSITIVITY LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
High	Recreational routes and public rights of way Important landscape features with cultural, historical or physical attributes Principle views from residential buildings Views from beauty spots
Moderate to high	Principle views from residential buildings with level of detracting element Oblique views from main window of properties Views from important landscape features with detracting element Views from recreational areas where view is part of wider experience People travelling through the landscape on roads, rail or other transport routes where this involves recognised scenic routes and an awareness of views and visual amenity
Moderate	Secondary views from residential buildings People travelling more generally through the landscape on roads, rail or other transport routes Outdoor recreational areas, where activities not related to views
Low	Views from industrial or commercial buildings or areas Drivers and passengers engaged in commercial travel/commuting Views from primarily functional main roads Views from trains

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## **Magnitude of impacts**

The magnitude of the effect to the landscape will be determined by evaluating and considering the following factors:

- Size or Scale of the development
- Extent: size of the development area within the context of the setting
- Duration or reversibility: short term, medium term, long term impact
- Distance from development
- Angle of view
- Degree of contrast
- Seasonality: leaf loss of deciduous vegetation

The following tables will be used to assess the level of magnitude of change likely to be experienced as a result of the Proposed Development:

## Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Land off Balmoral Avenue, Banbury, Oxfordshire  
Ref: 20\_140\_LVIA\_R01C

Table 4: Landscape Fabric Magnitude Criteria

MAGNITUDE LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
Very Large	Permanent change to and removal of characteristics of area, which cannot be replaced or mitigated against
Large	Permanent change to and removal of characteristics of area, with limited scope for mitigation
Medium	Partial removal of or moderate changes to characteristics and complete removal with suitable mitigation.
Small	Small scale changes, or change to small portion of large feature, with opportunity for mitigation.
Very small	Very small-scale changes, or change to small portion of large feature, with opportunity for mitigation.
Negligible	Changes to landscape element which have no effect on the integrity of the element as a whole and can be mitigated against by the provision of equivalent features.

Table 5: Landscape Character Magnitude Criteria

MAGNITUDE LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
Very Large	Fundamental change in the make-up and balance of landscape characteristics over an extensive area.
Large	Very obvious change in the balance of landscape characteristics over an extensive area and particularly intensive change over a smaller area.
Medium	Changes in an extensive area, which, whilst notable, do not alter the balance of landscape characteristics to moderate changes in local areas, which, whilst obvious, do not fundamentally change local character.
Small	Limited change in the wider landscape and/or modest/unremarkable change in the localized area.
Very small	Very small and unremarkable change in any components of the landscape.
Negligible	Change, which whilst occurring, would be virtually imperceptible within the wider landscape.

Table 6: Visual Assessment Magnitude Criteria

MAGNITUDE LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
Very large	Fundamental change in the make-up and balance of the view. Proposed Development dominant, a controlling feature.
Large	Obvious change in the balance of and make-up of the view. Proposed Development a prominent feature, nature of the view would change.
Medium	Moderate change in the balance of and make-up of the view. Proposed Development noticeably distinct. May lead to overall change in balance and composition.
Small	Proposed Development would be visible as new feature. Change limited and unlikely to affect the overall composition of view.
Very Small	Change in character make-up and balance of the view, which would be localised in extent, obscure, indistinct or may otherwise be easily missed.
Negligible	Proposed Development visually weak.

### Significance of the landscape/ visual impact

Once significance has been established, the assessment of effects and determination of magnitude will be based on the matrix in table 7.

This table however is only a general guide and more detailed/ specific judgements will be made when analysing the complex variations experienced from each viewpoint/ effect.



## Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Land off Balmoral Avenue, Banbury, Oxfordshire  
Ref: 20\_140\_LVIA\_R01C

Table 7: Matrix grading significance of the landscape & visual impact

Magnitude of impact	Sensitivity of Receptors				
	Low	Low to moderate	Moderate	Moderate to high	High
Very Large	Moderate adverse	Moderate to major adverse	Major adverse	Major to substantial adverse	Substantial adverse
Large	Minor to moderate adverse	Moderate adverse	Moderate to major adverse	Major adverse	Major to substantial adverse
Medium	Minor adverse	Minor to moderate adverse	Moderate adverse	Moderate to major adverse	Major adverse
Small	Slight to minor adverse	Minor adverse	Minor to moderate adverse	Moderate adverse	Moderate to major adverse
Very small	Slight adverse	Slight to minor adverse	Minor adverse	Minor to moderate adverse	Moderate adverse
Negligible	Negligible				
No change	No effect				

Grey shading indicates a potentially significant effect in Landscape Appraisal terms

### Mitigation

Mitigation is defined as: “Measures proposed to prevent/avoid, reduce and where possible remedy (or compensate for) any significant adverse landscape and visual effects...” (GLVIA3)

The LVIA is used as part of the iterative design process and therefore any mitigation measures required will be integrated into the project design as part of this process. These measures will be described within the report.

## Appendix B: Representative Viewpoints A to H





**Viewpoint A** - taken from PRoW 315/14/10  
**Camera type:** Canon EOS 60D with 50mm lens  
**Approx. grid reference:** 52°03'20"N, 1°22'14"W  
**Approx. elevation:** +150 AOD  
**Distance to nearest site boundary:** 375m

View of baseline site is blocked by hedge



**Viewpoint B** - taken from the only gap in an otherwise continuous hedge alongside PRoW 191/12/10  
**Camera type:** Canon EOS 60D with 50mm lens  
**Approx. grid reference:** 52°03'28"N, 1°22'14"W  
**Approx. elevation:** +151 AOD  
**Distance to nearest site boundary:** 377m





**Viewpoint C** - taken from PRoW 191/8/20  
**Camera type:** Canon EOS 60D with 50mm lens  
**Approx. grid reference:** 52°03'38"N, 1°22'08"W

**Approx. elevation:** +150 AOD  
**Distance to nearest site boundary:** 500m



**Viewpoint D** - taken from PRoW 315/14/10 - Baseline site lies beyond the hill and beyond the visible field boundary, therefore the extent of the site is not possible to determine  
**Camera type:** Canon EOS 60D with 50mm lens  
**Approx. grid reference:** 52°03'09"N, 1°22'28"W

**Approx. elevation:** +140 AOD  
**Distance to nearest site boundary:** 725m

**Land off Balmoral Avenue, Banbury, Oxfordshire**  
 Appendix C: Representative Viewpoint

Viewpoints C and D



Baseline site lies beyond these trees



**Viewpoint E** - taken from PRoW 315/4/30  
**Camera type:** Canon EOS 60D with 50mm lens  
**Approx. grid reference:** 52°03'22"N, 1°23'20"W

**Approx. elevation:** +132 AOD  
**Distance to nearest site boundary:** 1.6km

Mobile phone mast  
on neighbouring site

Baseline site lies beyond these trees



**Viewpoint F** - taken from PRoW 315/3/10  
**Camera type:** Canon EOS 60D with 50mm lens  
**Approx. grid reference:** 52°03'30"N, 1°23'24"W

**Approx. elevation:** +143 AOD  
**Distance to nearest site boundary:** 1.7km

**Land off Balmoral Avenue, Banbury, Oxfordshire**  
Appendix C: Representative Viewpoint

Viewpoints E and F



Baseline site lies beyond this field



**Viewpoint G** - taken from PRow 315/10/10  
**Camera type:** Canon EOS 60D with 50mm lens  
**Approx. grid reference:** 52°03'15"N, 1°23'31"W

**Approx. elevation:** +140 AOD  
**Distance to nearest site boundary:** 1.8km

Baseline site lies beyond this hedgeline and trees



**Viewpoint H** - taken from PRow 145/4/10  
**Camera type:** Canon EOS 60D with 50mm lens  
**Approx. grid reference:** 52°02'37"N, 1°22'23"W

**Approx. elevation:** +136 AOD  
**Distance to nearest site boundary:** 1.4km

**Land off Balmoral Avenue, Banbury, Oxfordshire**  
Appendix C: Representative Viewpoint

Viewpoints G and H



## Appendix C: Representative Viewpoints 1 to 8



Approximate extent of baseline site (extends beyond right-hand side of viewpoint photo)

PRoW 120/24/10



**Viewpoint 1** - taken from PRoW 120/24/10

**Camera type:** Canon EOS 60D with 50mm lens

**Approx. grid reference:** 52°03'22"N, 1°21'59"W

**Approx. elevation:** +161 AOD

**Distance to nearest site boundary:** 75m

Approximate extent of baseline site



**Viewpoint 2** - taken from Broughton Road

**Camera type:** Canon EOS 60D with 50mm lens

**Approx. grid reference:** 52°03'07"N, 1°22'10"W

**Approx. elevation:** +123 AOD

**Distance to nearest site boundary:** 420m

**Land off Balmoral Avenue, Banbury, Oxfordshire**  
Appendix C: Representative Viewpoint

Viewpoints 1 and 2





**Viewpoint 3** - taken from Crouch Hill Viewpoint  
**Camera type:** Canon EOS 60D with 50mm lens  
**Approx. grid reference:** 52°02'59"N, 1°21'35"W

**Approx. elevation:** +170 AOD  
**Distance to nearest site boundary:** 450m



**Viewpoint 4** - taken from Friswell Road  
**Camera type:** Canon EOS 60D with 50mm lens  
**Approx. grid reference:** 52°03'08"N, 1°21'33"W

**Approx. elevation:** +135 AOD  
**Distance to nearest site boundary:** 225m

**Land off Balmoral Avenue, Banbury, Oxfordshire**  
 Appendix C: Representative Viewpoint

Viewpoints 3 and 4





**Viewpoint 5** - taken from PRoW 120/24/10

**Camera type:** Canon EOS 60D with 50mm lens

**Approx. grid reference:** 52°03'26"N, 1°21'44"W

**Approx. elevation:** +150 AOD

**Distance to nearest site boundary:** 95m



**Viewpoint 6** - taken from PRoW 120/24/10

**Camera type:** iPhone - image illegible when taken using 50mm lens

**Approx. grid reference:** 52°03'25"N, 1°21'52"W

**Approx. elevation:** +155 AOD

**Distance to nearest site boundary:** Within site



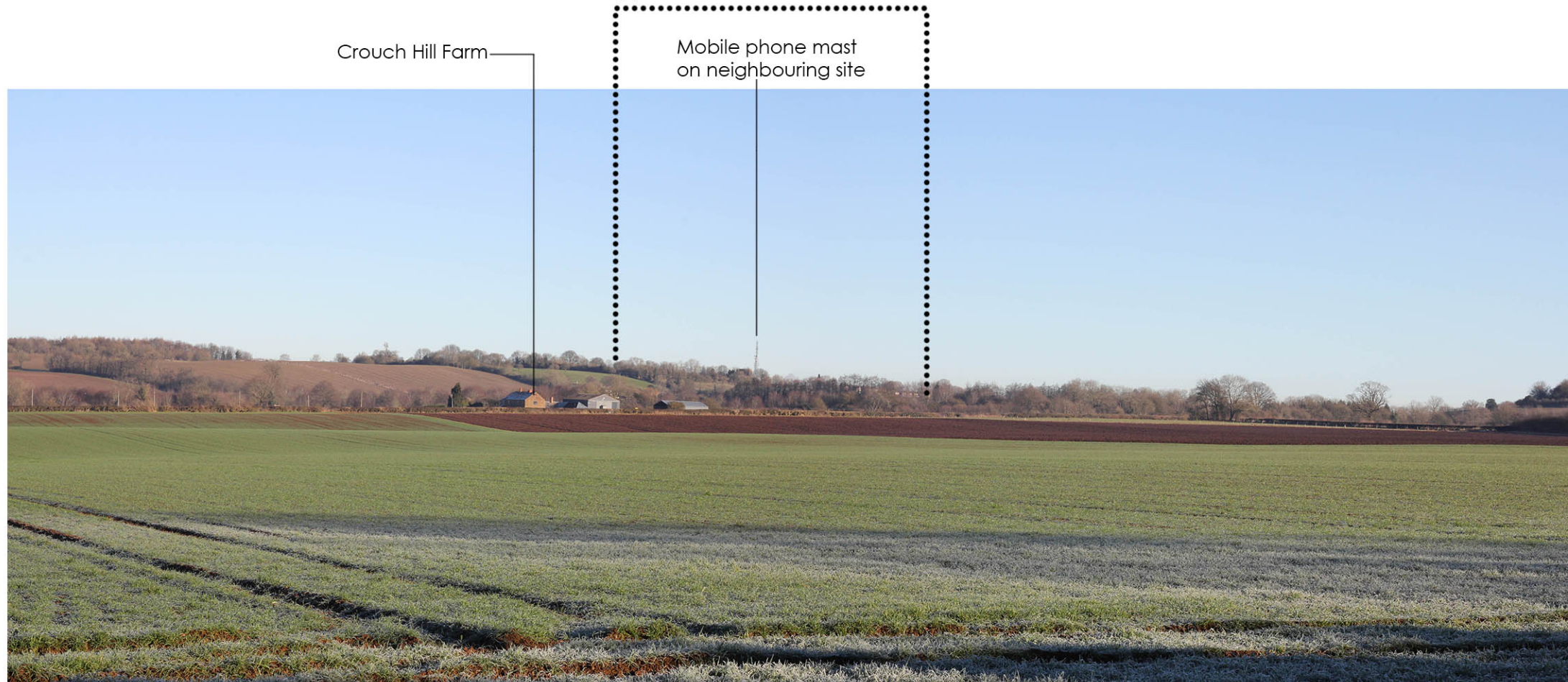
Approximate extent of baseline site



**Viewpoint 7** - taken from Broughton Road  
**Camera type:** Canon EOS 60D with 50mm lens  
**Approx. grid reference:** 52°03'12"N, 1°21'46"W

**Approx. elevation:** +130 AOD  
**Distance to nearest site boundary:** On site boundary

Approximate extent of baseline site



**Viewpoint 8** - taken from Wykam Lane  
**Camera type:** Canon EOS 60D with 50mm lens  
**Approx. grid reference:** 52°02'32"N, 1°22'49"W

**Approx. elevation:** +132 AOD  
**Distance to nearest site boundary:** 1.65km

**Land off Balmoral Avenue, Banbury, Oxfordshire**  
Appendix C: Representative Viewpoints

Viewpoints 7 and 8