

Appendix 8.8 Schedule of Likely Landscape Effects



APPENDIX 8.8 – LVIA SCHEDULE OF LIKELY LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

DISTRICT		
Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment – St Albans District LCA 33 Upper Lea Valley		
BASELINE	RECEPTORS AND THEIR SENSITIVITY (COMBINED JUDGEMENT ON VALUE AND SUSCEPTIBILITY)	SENSITIVITY
The western part of the Site (Site Parcels A & B) lies within LCA 33 Upper Lea Valley, which is described as “a marked valley form with a narrow river corridor. Arable cropping dominates on the slopes. A good number of estate woodlands creates a mature wooded fell to the east. Parklands are a notable feature making use of both slopes and river valley. Conversion to golf courses has been successful, while there is visual impact from 20th century settlements.”. The key characteristic of relevance to the Site and immediate study area include: - narrow and meandering river corridor; - strong slopes to the north and south; - parkland and woodland settings to the valley side; - discrete estate groupings of estate and plantation woodland; and - intrusive built edge of settlement – including Batsford and Harpenden The Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) considers the landscape condition and strength of the character for LCA 33 to be overall of “moderate condition”. The strategy for managing change is to ‘Improve and Conserve’ the landscape. The following landscape management guidelines and objectives for the LCA, of relevance to the Site and LVIA include: “Improve the network of woods within the open arable landscape between Wheathampstead and Harpenden by planting on the tops of the slopes to emphasise the valley form and to screen the raw built edges of 20th century development. - Use ancient hedge and field boundaries to identify the most appropriate location for woodland restoration and expansion. - Promote the appropriate management of woodland in order to maintain a rich ground flora. - Encourage the creation of wetland landscape features such as ponds, alder and pollarded willows. - Promote hedgerow restoration and creation in arable and pastoral areas to provide visual and ecological links between existing and proposed woodland areas. - Maintain and develop the traditional pattern of roadside verges, sunken lanes and hedgebanks as a local feature and a wildlife resource.”	Value The Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) considers the landscape condition and strength of the character for LCA 33 to be overall of “moderate condition”. In the context of the Study Area, the LCA 33 Upper Lea Valley is typically characterised by an open and gently undulating valley landscape, with a mix of arable farmland, pasture fields, hedgerows, and tree belts. The landscape condition is also considered to be moderate, with intact field boundaries and a coherent structure. The level of tranquillity is also considered as moderate, despite the linear network of busy roads (B653), the railway infrastructure and existing visual intrusion from the settlement edges of Batsford and Harpenden. The landscape is, at most, valued locally with LCA 33 and the Site located within the Landscape Conservation Areas (Policy 104) as defined in the local planning policies. Most of the heritage assets (Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings) are located over 1km from the Site, within the urban area of Harpenden. Overall, the landscape value is considered to be Medium.	Medium
	Susceptibility The Site is located directly adjacent to the existing settlement edge of Harpenden and Batsford, where the urban fringe and suburbanising elements are already a key characteristic of LCA 33. The Site is allocated for primarily residential development under Policy LG1 – Broad Locations (Ref: Site B2) in the Draft Local Plan 2041 Regulation 19 Publication (SADC September 2024). The combination of existing built form, undulating landform, wooded context (from trees, woodland and hedgerow) provides a good level of containment around the Site and would assist with the assimilation of potential development into the existing landscape. It is considered the landscape receptor has a high level of ability to accept the type of development proposed. The introduction of a residential development within Site Parcels A, the southern part of Site Parcels B & C and Site Parcel D, retaining the northern parts of the Site as Green Belt in a public parkland setting, would be in keeping with development on adjacent land in this area, therefore overall the landscape susceptibility of this receptor is considered to be Low.	
	MAGNITUDE OF IMPACT (SCALE, DEGREE OF CONTRAST, DISTANCE FROM RECEPTOR, EXTENT AND DURATION)	EFFECT
	Construction Phase During construction, there would be temporary limited alteration to the landscape resources of LCA 33, with the majority of the existing boundary vegetation retained as part of the Proposed Development, with the exception of vegetation clearance works associated with access of Lower Luton Road and clearance of vegetation to Site Parcel A. There would be alterations to landform associated with earthworks, particularly to Site Parcel B, to accommodate building platforms and the access road. Construction would introduce a temporary level of activity into the local area, which would only affect proportionally a very small part of the LCA, with the wider character area remaining unaffected. Therefore, the scale of change is considered low due to the minor loss and alteration of existing landscape features, with the landscape change restricted to and influencing the immediate setting of the Proposed Development, resulting in a negative effect that would be indiscernible to the wider landscape. Therefore, the magnitude of impact is considered Small Adverse.	Temporary Minor Adverse (Not Significant)
	Operation Phase (Year 0) At completion, the Proposed Development would result in the permanent change of the grazing pasture land (Site Parcel B) as well as the existing Greenacres Equestrian Centre (Site Parcel A) to residential built form with associated infrastructure and open space. The character will shift to a more structured settlement urban edge and form an extension to the existing urban character of Batsford. The scale of change is considered low, due to the minor loss and alteration of existing landscape features, restricted to the Site, resulting in a negative effect that would only influence the immediate setting of the Proposed Development – with the influence of built form perceptible in isolated parts of the LCA to the west (given the influence of the undulating topography), set with similar development on the existing settlement edge of Harpenden and Batsford. The northern parts of Site Parcel B will remain as Green Belt, developed as a parkland open space, which would assist in the transition out to the wider rural countryside. Therefore, the magnitude of change, pre-mitigation, is considered Small Adverse.	Short Term Minor Adverse (Not Significant)
	Operation Phase (Year 15) Mitigation and enhancement proposals for the Site are developed with the aim of protecting and enhancing landscape character and connecting with wider green infrastructure. Woodland blocks, hedgerows and scattered trees will be proposed within the new ‘Valley Parkland’ in the northern part of Site Parcel B along the existing valley slope, enhancing the wooded character and helping integrate the development into the Lea Valley character area. However, the fundamental change in land use and the minor settlement expansion will remain locally influential, with the wider LCA 33 remaining unaffected due to the ultimate high level of containment, resulting in a barely perceptible degree of change. Therefore, the magnitude of change is considered Negligible Adverse.	Long Term Negligible Adverse (Not Significant)

DISTRICT		
Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment – St Albans District LCA 34 Blackmore End Plateau		
BASELINE	RECEPTORS AND THEIR SENSITIVITY (COMBINED JUDGEMENT ON VALUE AND SUSCEPTIBILITY)	SENSITIVITY
The eastern part of the Site (Site Parcels C & D) lies within LCA 34 Blackmore End Plateau. The landscape character of LCA 34 Blackmore End Plateau is described as <i>“an elevated plateau with extensive arable fields. Despite recent landscape change there is a strong sense of continuity closer to the settlements and around some of the notable historic houses and parklands. The area has a tranquil and remote feel with good opportunities for informal recreation.”</i> The key characteristics of relevance to the Site and immediate study area include: - elevated plateau area dominated by large arable fields; - linear and discrete woodland scattered through area; - remote and quiet with few detracting features. The Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) considers the landscape condition and strength of the character for LCA 34 to be overall of <i>“moderate condition”</i>. The guidelines for managing change of 'Improve and Conserve' the landscape. The following landscape management guidelines and objectives for the LCA are of relevance to the Site and LVIA include: <i>“Extend the network of woodlands across the plateau, especially where this will help in creating habitat links across arable areas.</i> <i>Maintain and extend the rights of way across the area.</i> <i>Promote the appropriate management of woodland in order to maintain a rich ground flora.</i> <i>Promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and important semi natural habitats and the creation of links between semi natural habitats.</i> <i>Promote hedgerow restoration and creation throughout the area to provide visual and ecological links between existing and proposed woodland areas.</i> <i>Promote both the creation of new ponds and retention of the existing ponds for wildlife.</i> <i>Protect the traditional pattern of local lanes and the associated features.</i> <i>Maintain the tranquil quality of the area while allowing access for visitors.”</i>	Value The Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) considers the landscape condition and strength of the character for LCA 34 to be overall of <i>“moderate condition”</i>. The LCA beyond the Site features areas of woodland, with several designated Ancient Woodland and Local Wildlife Sites (LWS). The landscape is at most valued locally with LCA 33 and the Site located within the Landscape Conservation Areas (Policy 104) as defined in the local planning policies. Most of the heritage assets (Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings) are located over 1km from the Site, within Mackeyre End. In the context of the Study Area, the LCA 34 Blackmore End Plateau features an elevated and gently undulating terrain, which is dominated by a mix of large, irregularly shaped arable fields alongside smaller pastoral areas. The fields are often interspersed with linear and discrete woodlands. Despite recent changes due to agricultural intensification, the landscape retains a moderate to strong sense of continuity. Overall, the landscape value is considered to be Medium.	Medium
	Susceptibility The Site is located in the south west part LCA 34 where it interfaces and is influenced by the settlement edge of Batsford and Harpenden. Its position on the lower slopes of the plateau means that it is partially screened by landform and visually connected to the existing settlement edge, which offers opportunity for integration with the Proposed Development. The Site is allocated for primarily residential development under Policy LG1 – Broad Locations (Ref: Site B2) in the Draft Local Plan 2041 Regulation 19 Publication (SADC September 2024). The combination of existing built form, landform, wooded context from trees, woodland and hedgerow provides a good level of visual containment and would assist with the assimilation of potential development into the existing landscape. It is considered the landscape receptor has a high level of ability to accept the type of development proposed. Therefore, the landscape susceptibility of this receptor is considered to be Low.	
	MAGNITUDE OF IMPACT (SCALE, DEGREE OF CONTRAST, DISTANCE FROM RECEPTOR, EXTENT AND DURATION)	EFFECT
	Construction Phase During construction, there would be temporary limited alteration to the landscape resources of LCA 34, with the majority of the existing boundary vegetation retained as part of the Proposed Development, with the exception of vegetation clearance works associated with access between Site Parcels C and D with a break in the hedgerow for vehicular access and clearance of low value vegetation in Site Parcel C. There would be alterations to landform associated with earthworks, to accommodate building platforms and access roads. Construction would introduce a temporary level of activity into the local area, which would only affect proportionally a very small part of the LCA, with the wider character area remaining unaffected. Therefore, the scale of change is considered low due to the minor loss and alteration of existing landscape features, with the landscape change restricted to and influencing the immediate setting of the Proposed Development, resulting in a negative effect that would be indiscernible to the wider landscape. The temporary loss of tranquillity, combined with movement and visual intrusion from construction activity, would reduce the perceived semi-rural character the landscape. Therefore, the magnitude of impact is considered Small Adverse.	Temporary Minor Adverse (Not Significant)
	Operation Phase (Year 0) At completion, the Proposed Development would result in the permanent change of the grazing pastures of Site Parcels C and D to residential built form, primary school, extra care, local centre with associated infrastructure and open space. The northern parts of Site Parcels C and D would remain as Green Belt, developed as a parkland open space, which would assist in the transition out to the wider rural countryside of LCA 34, helping to retain a degree of visual and functional separation from the open countryside. The scale of landscape change is considered low, as the development results in a minor loss and alteration of existing landscape features, resulting in a negative effect that would only influence the immediate setting of the Proposed Development. Therefore, the magnitude of impact is considered Small Adverse.	Short Term Minor Adverse (Not Significant)
	Operation Phase (Year 15) By Year 15, the proposed embedded and landscape mitigation identified on the Landscape Strategy will have matured. Proposals include substantial woodland and tree planting in the new 'Valley Parkland' in the northern part of Site Parcel C, and green infrastructure through the development as part of public open spaces (Neighbourhood Park) and streets. The new open space in the northern part of the Site Parcel C and the playing fields and external areas associated with the Primary School will have established as a perceptual green buffer, maintaining a sense of separation between the new built form and the wider rural landscape of LCA 34 – Blackmore End Plateau. Proposed woodland, hedgerow, and tree planting will soften the appearance of built elements and reinforce the landscape structure that characterises the local area. The overall extent of change to landscape elements and character will remain limited to the immediate context of the Site, affecting a very small proportion of LCA 34, with the development being viewed as a contained extension to the existing urban edge of Harpenden. Therefore, the magnitude of impact is considered Negligible Adverse.	Long Term Negligible Adverse (Not Significant)

SITE LEVEL		
Landscape Character of Site - individual components of the physical landscape that are present in the Site		
BASELINE	RECEPTORS AND THEIR SENSITIVITY (COMBINED JUDGEMENT ON VALUE AND SUSCEPTIBILITY)	SENSITIVITY
Topography & Hydrology The Site's topography and landform is influenced and characterised by valley slopes and plateau landform associated with the Lea Valley. The Site's landform slopes from approximately +131m AOD at its northeastern point, descending to around +118m AOD along the southern boundary and approximately +89m AOD near the western boundary along B653 Lower Luton Road, close to Greenacres Equestrian. The topography is a defining characteristic of the Site, with the land gently rising from the Lea Valley in the northwest towards Blackmore End plateau in the northeast. Land Use The majority of the Site (c. 90%) consists of several medium sized pastoral fields primarily used for grazing, as part Greenacres Equestrian Centre. These fields are partly enclosed or divided by mature hedgerow with trees, while others are separated by traditional agricultural fencing. The remainder of the Site, located on the western edge, adjacent to B653 Lower Luton Road and B652 Bower Heath Lane, contains a collection of agricultural buildings, stables, menage, small paddocks and a few residential properties, all associated with Greenacres Equestrian Centre. Trees, Hedgerow and Woodland The Site, for the majority, comprises horse-grazed grassland fields, with native hedgerows present along the majority of the Site's boundaries and a few internal field boundaries. Several individual trees are also present, mostly in the centre and west of the site. Chapter 9: Ecology and supporting Appendix 9.1 habitats and ecological features plan (Figure 9.1) identifies the following habitats and landscape features of local importance worth retaining associated with the Site: - Small areas of Lowland Mixed Deciduous woodland located in the Site's western corner, close to the equestrian building complex (Site Parcel A) - The boundary native hedgerows and trees, which are considered good condition and form continuous landscape features, however, the hedgerows internally within the Site mostly appear in shorter sections.	Value The Site is not associated with any statutory ecological designations but does feature landscape designations including Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) trees and groups of vegetation and is located within a Landscape Conservation Area (Policy 104 of the Local Plan). The landscape has limited amenity value, only publicly accessible through Site Parcel B via public footpath (ref: Harpenden 034). The Site's existing poor-quality pastoral grassland is appraised as having a low landscape value. The presence of on-site Category A trees and TPO trees, and hedgerow field boundaries are of high value, which alongside the undulating valley and plateau landform contributes to the local character. The condition of the landscape and its individual elements is good and is generally well maintained. Overall, the value of the landscape at Site level is considered to be Medium.	Medium
	Susceptibility The Site is wholly located within the Green Belt as defined in The District Local Plan View 1994 Saved and Deleted Policies Version (SACDC, 2020). However, the Site is allocated for primarily residential development under Policy LG1 – Broad Locations (Ref: Site B2) in the Draft Local Plan 2041 Regulation 19 Publication (SADC September 2024), with the northern parts of Site Parcels B and C, remaining in the Green Belt. There is existing reference to residential development, with the adjacent settlement edges of Batsford and Harpenden influencing the 'edge of settlement' character to the southern parts of the Site. The existing topography, trees and boundary vegetation provide a degree of enclosure in certain directions, albeit with a modest degree of interaction with other parts of the landscape, particularly to the north. The receptor has a high level of ability to accept the type of development proposed and there are good opportunities for mitigation and enhancement. Overall, landscape susceptibility is considered to be Medium.	
	MAGNITUDE OF IMPACT (SCALE, DEGREE OF CONTRAST, DISTANCE FROM RECEPTOR, EXTENT AND DURATION)	EFFECT
	Construction Phase During construction, there would be a direct, permanent loss of the low value grassland within the Site, to accommodate development platforms and construction activity. The Site access points from Lower Luton Road and Bower Heath Lane would result in the direct permanent loss of part of vegetation (ref:G38 & G16 both Category B of medium value) and vehicular access points to Site Parcel D would result in direct breaks through hedgerow (ref: H9) vegetation (ref: G21 – Category C of low value). Clearance of a large proportion of vegetation would occur on Site Parcel A, albeit this vegetation is identified as Category C of low value. Protective fencing will be installed to all areas of retained woodland and trees prior to the onset of development. Where individual trees occur outside those fence lines, each tree will be protected by fencing (to be installed at the outer edge of the root protection area, as defined in an arboricultural report and Tree Protection Plan, in accordance with BS5837:2012). Construction activities (including ground re-profiling, infrastructure installation, vehicle movement, and temporary compounds) will disrupt the coherence and tranquility of the existing pastoral urban fringe landscape. The loss of pastoral grazing land, partial removal of field boundary vegetation, onsite scrub or trees, and presence of construction activity will affect the landscape character at the Site level. Hoarding will be erected to provide another layer of containment. The construction traffic will also introduce temporary uncharacteristic features into the local landscape in close proximity. The size and scale of change is considered to be medium, due to the partial loss of a small proportion of existing landscape features (albeit with the vast majority of valued features retained and protected), and the addition of uncharacteristic features and elements. Therefore, the magnitude of impact is considered to be Medium Adverse.	Temporary Moderate Adverse (Potential to be Significant)
	Operation Phase (Year 0) On completion of the works, there would be a direct, permanent loss of the low value grassland area within the Site, replaced with a high-quality residential / mixed use development and new green infrastructure. The built form of residential, extra care and primary school land use would exist within Site Parcels A, southern parts of Site Parcel B and C and within Site Parcel D - with the northern parts of C and D set within a strong landscape framework - and would be accommodated with no impacts to the existing areas of TPO trees within the Site (which would be retained, integrated and supplemented as part of the Proposed Development). The new open space in the northern part of Site Parcel C and the playing fields and external areas associated with the Primary School will form a perceptual green buffer, maintaining a sense of separation between the new built form and the wider rural landscape. At completion, mitigation and enhancement measures would have introduced extensive tree, shrub and hedgerow planting (albeit at an immature stage), internally and on the boundaries, using locally prevalent and native species that accord with relevant landscape guidance and in planting arrangements to reflect local character, helping to assimilate the Proposed Development with the wider landscape setting. The scale of change would result in a Small Adverse magnitude of change at year 0.	Short Term Minor to Moderate Adverse (Not Significant)

There are no records of any ancient woodland, priority habitats, notable or veteran trees within the Site. There are two TPO's associated with the Site including: - TPO No. 1766: A2 – a group Tree Preservation Order (TPO) on all deciduous and evergreen broadleaf species along the Site's northern boundary. - TPO No. 1950: on trees T5, T6 and T7 (ref: associated with TPO) along the Site's north eastern boundary alongside Common Lane in hedgerow H10 and T4 within hedgerow H9 in the north eastern part of the Site. <u>Access and Recreational Routes</u> There is a non-designated existing private track which runs through the Site from the Equestrian Centre in the west to Common Lane in the north east. There is existing vehicular access into the Site from Bower Heath Lane and Common Lane. The Site is currently private land and not accessible to the public. There is an existing public footpath (ref: Harpenden 034) which runs through the Site, from the settlement edge of Batsford at Turners Close in the south to Bower Heath Lane in the north west. <u>Heritage</u> There are no statutory heritage designations covering any part of the Site. <u>Associations</u> There are no know associations between the Site and well know forms of artwork, literature, poetry or popular culture (e.g. film and TV).	<u>Post Mitigation Establishment (Year 15)</u> Landscape mitigation and enhancement proposals will have matured to provide adequate screening and softening of the new built form, helping to further assimilate the Proposed Development into the wider landscape. New tree, woodland and hedgerow planting will be well established, offering a stronger coverage to further enhance the local well wooded landscape character, particularly on the valley slopes and plateau area of the new parkland. Although there will be permanent presence of the new built form, the landscape proposals will provide a well-established landscape setting which complements and links to the adjacent Batsford development. The existing areas of TPO trees within the Site would be protected, conserved and enhanced as part of long term stewardship and management of the Green Infrastructure network and open spaces. The targeted green infrastructure enhancements within Site Parcel B and C as part of the new parkland (retained as Green Belt) - including the provision of public open space, community growing areas, play areas, access network and recreational facilities - are considered beneficial to the character of the Site and amenity value. The integration of Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) features will also contribute to a more diverse range of habitats, improving the ecological quality and character of the Site over time. In the long term, the Proposed Development will be perceived as part of the urban edge of Batsford and Harpenden, but with the benefit of improved green infrastructure and enhanced habitat connectivity. The existing topography will largely be retained, ensuring that the development responds to the gentle undulation of the plateau and complements the roofline profile of the current settlement edge. Therefore, with the expansion of valuable landscape features across the Site, on balance, the magnitude of change is considered to be Small Beneficial.	Long Term Minor Beneficial (Not Significant)
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