



Land to the north of Mill Lane,  
Sawston

## **Landscape and Visual Overview & Green Belt Assessment**

Prepared by  
CSA Environmental

on behalf of  
Carter Jonas

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 CSA Environmental has been appointed by Carter Jonas on behalf of NW Bio and Advent to undertake a Landscape and Visual Overview of land north of Mill Lane, Sawston (the 'Site'). The Site is currently situated within the Green Belt and this report also considers the impact of releasing the Site in terms of the functions and purposes of the Green Belt. The report accompanies representations to the Greater Cambridge Local Plan – The First Conversation (Issues and Options).
- 1.2 The Site comprises an area of land on the north western edge of Sawston, and is approximately 6.83 hectares in size. It lies in the jurisdiction of South Cambridgeshire District Council. The location and extent of the Site is shown on the Site Location Plan at **Appendix A** and on the Aerial Photograph at **Appendix B**.
- 1.3 This assessment describes the existing landscape character and quality of the Site and the surrounding area. The report then goes on to discuss the suitability of the Site for release from the Green Belt and its ability to accommodate potential development, by considering the potential landscape and visual effects on the wider area.

### **Methodology**

- 1.4 This assessment is based on a site visit undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced Landscape Architect in February 2020. The weather conditions at the time were clear, for most of the site visit and visibility was good.
- 1.5 In landscape and visual assessments, a distinction is drawn between landscape effects (i.e. effects on the character or quality of the landscape irrespective of whether there are any views of the landscape, or viewers to see them) and visual effects (i.e. effects on people's views of the landscape from public vantage points, including public rights of way and other areas with general public access, as well as effects from any residential properties). This report therefore considers the potential impact of the development on both landscape character and visibility. The methodology utilised in this report is contained in **Appendix E**.
- 1.6 Photographs contained within this document (**Appendix C**) were taken using a digital camera with a lens focal length approximating to 50mm, to give a similar depth of vision to the human eye. In some instances images have been combined to create a panorama.

## 2.0 LANDSCAPE POLICY CONTEXT

### National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019)

- 2.1 National policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') and those parts relevant to this assessment are summarised below.
- 2.2 Paragraphs 10 and 11 of the NPPF state that at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be applied in relation to both plan-making and decision-taking.
- 2.3 Paragraph 20 of the NPPF states that strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for, among other elements, the '*(d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.*'
- 2.4 Section 12 of the NPPF sets out that planning policies and decisions should support the creation of high quality buildings and places. Paragraph 125 states that '*... design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics.*'
- 2.5 Paragraph 127 states that planning policies and decisions, should ensure that developments, amongst others:
- '*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 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...*'
- 2.6 Paragraph 130 states that development should be refused where poor design '*... fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions ...*' after having taken other design guidance into account. The paragraph continues that design should not be used for a reason for refusal when proposals accord with plan policies.

2.7 In Section 13 'Protecting Green Belt Land' paragraph 133 of the NPPF states that the essential character of Green Belts is their openness and their permanence, with the fundamental aim of preventing urban sprawl. Paragraph 134 sets out the five purposes which Green Belt should serve:

- *'to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- *to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- *to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- *to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- *to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.'*

2.8 Paragraphs 136 to 139 outline the national planning policy relating to the definition of Green Belt boundaries. Paragraph 136 states that, *'Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans...'*. Paragraph 139 outlines the elements that should be considered when defining Green Belt boundaries. Paragraph 139 (f) states that plans should, *'define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.'*

2.9 Section 15 of the NPPF deals with conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Paragraph 170 of the document states that the planning system should contribute to the protection and enhancement of the natural and local environment through, among other things, protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, *'... (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)'*. The paragraph also outlines that the planning system should recognise 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.'*

### **Planning Practice Guidance**

2.10 The Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG') is in the process of being updated to reflect the changes following the publication of the revised NPPF. Any PPG paragraphs which have not been updated remain relevant until they are updated, insofar as they are consistent with the Revised NPPF 2019. The guidance as relevant to this assessment covers

landscape and the natural environment, the design of new developments, and Green Belt.

- 2.11 The Design section of the guidance describes the importance of good design as an integral part of providing sustainable development. Paragraph 6 (ID: 26-006-20140306) states:

*'Design impacts on how people interact with places. Although design is only part of the planning process it can affect a range of economic, social and environmental objectives beyond the requirement for good design in its own right. Planning policies and decisions should seek to ensure the physical environment supports these objectives.'*

- 2.12 The following issues should be considered:

- local character (including landscape setting)
- safe, connected and efficient streets
- a network of greenspaces (including parks) and public places
- crime prevention
- security measures
- access and inclusion
- efficient use of natural resources
- cohesive and vibrant neighbourhoods.

- 2.13 Paragraph 7 of the Design section notes that the successful integration of all forms of development with their surrounding context is an important consideration.

- 2.14 The Natural environment section of the guidance aims to explain the key issues to consider in relation to the implementation of policies to protect and enhance the natural environment, including local requirements.

- 2.15 Paragraph 004 defines Green Infrastructure, while in paragraph 005 it explains its importance as a natural capital asset that provides multiple benefits, including among other things enhanced biodiversity and landscapes and urban cooling. In paragraph 006 the guidance sets out the planning goals green infrastructure can assist in achieving, and these are:

- *Building a strong, competitive economy;*
- *Achieving well-designed places;*
- *Promoting healthy and safe communities;*
- *Mitigating climate change, flooding and coastal change;*



- *Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.*

2.16 Paragraph 007 states that strategic policies can propose the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure networks, and to support their implementation, the location of existing and proposed green infrastructure, and any gaps in provision, should be established through evidence-based assessment.

2.17 The final paragraph in the green infrastructure sub-section notes that:

*'Green infrastructure opportunities and requirements need to be considered at the earliest stages of development proposals, as an integral part of development and infrastructure provision, and taking into account existing natural assets and the most suitable locations and types of new provision.'*

2.18 Within the Biodiversity, geodiversity and ecosystems section, the topic of net gain has been included. Paragraph 020 describes net gain as *'... an approach to development that leaves the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand. Net gain is an umbrella term for both biodiversity net gain and wider environmental net gain.'*

2.19 In the Landscape section of the guidance, paragraph 036 refers to that part of paragraph 170 of the NPPF which deals with the recognition of the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside in local plans, and the need for strategic policies to *'... provide for the conservation and enhancement of landscapes. This can include nationally and locally-designated landscapes but also the wider countryside.'* Paragraph 036 goes on to note that,

*'Where landscapes have a particular local value, it is important for policies to identify their special characteristics and be supported by proportionate evidence. Policies may set out criteria against which proposals for development affecting these areas will be assessed. Plans can also include policies to avoid adverse impacts on landscapes and to set out necessary mitigation measures, such as appropriate design principles and visual screening, where necessary. The cumulative impacts of development on the landscape need to be considered carefully.'*

2.20 The Green Belt section of the guidance under paragraph 001 notes that judging the openness of Green Belt land depends upon the circumstances of the case. The guidance notes that there are a number of factors to consider, and sets out three examples which include, but are not limited to:

- *openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects – in other words, the visual impact of the proposal may be relevant,*

*as could its volume;*

- *the duration of the development, and its remediability – taking into account any provisions to return land to its original state or to an equivalent (or improved) state of openness; and*
- *the degree of activity likely to be generated, such as traffic generation.*

2.21 Paragraph 002 deal with compensatory measures which local planning authorities should require in relation to the remaining Green Belt land when land is released for development. It notes environmental improvements to the quality and accessibility of the remaining land should be informed by landscape, biodiversity or recreational need and by identified opportunities in local strategies and could include:

- *New or enhanced green infrastructure;*
- *Woodland planting;*
- *Landscape and visual enhancements (beyond those needed to mitigate the immediate impacts of the proposal);*
- *Improvements to biodiversity, habitat connectivity and natural capital;*
- *New or enhanced walking and cycling routes; and*
- *Improved access to new, enhanced or existing recreational and playing field provision.*

2.22 Paragraph 003 states that in order to secure compensatory improvements, early engagement with landowners and other interest groups once land has been identified for release will be required.

### **Local Policy Context**

2.23 Local planning policy for the Site is set out in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (adopted September 2018) which covers the period between 2011 and 2031.

2.24 An early joint review of the Local Plans of South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire City Council is currently being undertaken, with a Greater Cambridgeshire Local Plan Issues and Options consultation extending from 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020 to 24<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

### South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (adopted September 2018)

2.25 Those parts relevant to the Site and this assessment are summarised below.

- 2.26 **Policy S/1: Vision** sets out the aims of the Local Plan, and is supported by **Policy S/2: Objectives of the Local Plan**. The objectives of relevance to the Site and this assessment, among others, are:
- To protect South Cambridgeshire's built and natural character and heritage, and the Cambridge Green Belt, with new development being expected to enhance the area and its biodiversity; and
  - To deliver developments which are reflective of the location, distinctive in character, and respond robustly to climate change.
- 2.27 **Policy S/4: Cambridge Green Belt** states that the Green Belt will be maintained and that new development within the Green Belt will be required to comply with Green Belt policy as set out in the NPPF.
- 2.28 **Policy S/7: Development Frameworks** states that development outside development frameworks will only be allowed where sites have been allocated in Neighbourhood Plans, where sites which require countryside locations are being developed, or other policies within the Local Plan support development.
- 2.29 **Policy S/8: Rural Centres** identifies the rural centres of the district, which includes Sawston.
- 2.30 **Policy HQ/1: Design Principles** states that all new development must respond and make a positive contribution to both its local and wider context, by among other things, being of high-quality design; preserving or enhancing the local urban and rural character; conserving and enhancing natural and historic assets and their settings; and designing developments which create a positive sense of place.
- 2.31 **Policy NH/2: Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character** states that permission will only be granted to development which respects and retains, or enhances the character and distinctiveness of the local landscape and of the National Character Area in which it is located.
- 2.32 **Policy NH/4: Biodiversity** states, among other things, that new development would be expected to maintain, enhance, restore or add to biodiversity, with the development designed to achieve positive gain.
- 2.33 **Policy NH/6: Green Infrastructure** states that the Council will aim to conserve and enhance green infrastructure (GI) within the district and contribute to it. Where there is loss or harm as a result of a proposal, the policy requires that the benefits of development demonstrably and substantially outweigh the harm or loss. The policy goes on to state that proposals will be supported where existing GI is reinforced, linked to and buffered, where new GI is created and where it is promoted, managed,

interpreted and enhanced for public enjoyment. As set out in the policy, proposals will be expected to contribute to local GI and to deliver strategic GI according to the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy.

- 2.34 **Policy NH/8: Mitigating the Impact of Development In and Adjoining the Green Belt** states that any adverse effect on the rural character and openness of the Green Belt as a result of development within it should be mitigated through design and location, and where development is permitted mitigation will be enforced through landscaping conditions and a requirement for adequate planting maintenance. The policy goes on to require careful landscaping and high-quality design measures where development lies on the edge of a settlement which is surrounded by Green Belt.
- 2.35 **Policy NH/14: Heritage Assets** states that new development will be supported where, among other things, the special character and distinctiveness of the district's historic environment, including its villages and countryside, is sustained and enhanced.

**South Cambridgeshire District Council District Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (adopted March 2010)**

- 2.36 Despite this document having been written to support the previous development plans, it remains a material consideration in planning applications insofar as it is consistent with national and local policy and guidance. The aim of the document is to assist applicants to achieve a high quality environment that integrates housing, employment and community uses, with infrastructure and green areas and the wider landscape; assist in the understanding of the importance of local context; and to assist in what information is required to accompany planning applications.

**Greater Cambridge Local Plan Issues and Options**

- 2.37 The document sets out the big themes which Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council consider necessary to explore in order to shape the area to 2040. There are four broad themes, climate change, biodiversity and green spaces, wellbeing and social inclusion and great places.
- 2.38 Green Belt falls within a section entitled 'Key Influences on Locating New Development'. It is noted in this section that Green Belt will be an important issue for the emerging plan. It states that the plan will need to balance the current Green Belt extent which restricts potentially sustainable growth on the edge of Cambridge with the recent changes which require alternatives to be explored before land can be removed.

- 2.39 Following the public consultation a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment will be prepared by the joint councils.

### **Cambridgeshire Green Belt Assessments**

- 2.40 Two Green Belt assessments have been undertaken by LDA Design for parts of the Green Belt in Cambridgeshire. The first, published in 2002, is entitled Cambridgeshire Green Belt Study. Although this study touches upon the baseline in the vicinity of the Site, it concentrates on the Green Belt on the eastern side of Cambridge, and makes no assessment of the performance of the Green Belt of the Site or its environs.
- 2.41 The later study, published in 2015, is entitled Cambridge Inner Green Belt Boundary Study. As the name suggests, the study concentrates on the land immediately around Cambridge, and therefore does not include Sawston, extending to land north of Great Shelford as its southern extent.

### 3.0 SITE CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Site lies on the north western edge of Sawston, immediately to the west of the playing fields of Sawston Village College, with properties on White Field Way and New Road indented into the south eastern corner of the Site. It comprises two arable fields, bisected by a tree belt which runs north-south through them, and the Site also includes the majority of White Field Way. The centre of Cambridge lies approximately 10km from the centre of Sawston. The location of the Site and its immediate context are illustrated on the Location Plan in **Appendix A**, the Aerial Photograph in **Appendix B**, and on the photographs contained in **Appendix C**.
- 3.2 To the west of the Site is the A1301 road, beyond which is a triangular arable field, with the Liverpool Street to Cambridge railway line to its west and Sawston Business Park immediately beyond the railway line. Further to the west lies the River Cam, which flows in a roughly north-south direction, with the low-lying land of the flood plain to the east and west.
- 3.3 To the north of the Site are a number of arable fields formed into triangle of land by the A1301 road to the west and Cambridge Road to the east. Further arable fields, a Sewage works, and some woodland separate Sawston from the settlements of Stapleford and Little Shelford to the north and northwest respectively. To the northeast, approximately 3.5km from the Site is the Magog Down, an area of community recreation land, while the well-wooded, Wandlebury County Park, lies opposite it to the northeast of the A1307 road.
- 3.4 To the east of the Site, beyond Sawston Village College, lies the northern part of Sawston, with arable farmland beyond it, interspersed with strips of woodland. To the southeast of the Site, the existing development comprises modern, later 20<sup>th</sup> century housing.
- 3.5 To the south of the Site, beyond Mill Lane lies the western edge of the village, backing onto a network of small-scale pastoral fields which lie on the low-lying land close to the River Cam. To the southwest, west of the A1301 road, the railway line and the River Cam, lies the settlement of Whittlesford, approximately 1.5km from the Site.
- 3.6 The wider landscape around Sawston comprises a mosaic of mainly arable fields of varying scales, separated by strips and larger areas of woodland. Villages are dotted through this farmland, which is cut through by the M11 motorway to the west and the A11 dual carriageway to the east. A number of minor A- and B-roads connect the settlements and the wider transport network.

## **National Landscape Character**

- 3.7 England's National Character Areas Profiles ('NCA') divide England into 159 distinct natural areas, defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, cultural and economic activity. The Site lies roughly in the centre of the East Anglian Chalk National Character Area (Profile 87).
- 3.8 The East Anglian Chalk NCA is described as a generally open landscape in predominantly arable production containing distinctive chalk river valleys formed by the River Rhee and the River Granta, which converge south of Cambridge to form the River Cam. Settlement is focused in small towns and villages with a number of expanding commuter villages. The Icknield Way, once an ancient route and now a public right of way, traverses the NCA.

## **Regional Landscape Character**

- 3.9 Cambridgeshire County Council published the Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines in 1993, which defined landscape character areas (LCA) for the County. The Site lies roughly within the centre of Area 2: Chalklands LCA, the key characteristics and those of relevance to this assessment include:
- Smooth, rolling hills of chalkland dissected into gentle valleys by Rivers Rhee and Granta, which converge to form the River Cam south of Cambridge;
  - Land in predominantly arable production, in spite of poor, thin soils, with limited remaining 19<sup>th</sup> century botanically rich grasslands;
  - Large-scale fields, often as a result of agricultural amalgamation, with low trimmed hedgerows and few trees;
  - Small beech copses ('hangers'), which appear prominent in the landscape, on some high points; and
  - Historically settled part of the county, with evidence of human presence in the landscape, including several historical transport routes, such as the Icknield Way.
- 3.10 Landscape improvement and management within the LCA recommends, amongst other things,
- management and creation of chalk grasslands;
  - management of existing, and the planting of new shelter belts and mixed woodlands;
  - management of existing and planting of new hedgerows; and
  - new planting along road corridors.

- 3.11 From our own assessment of the Site and its surroundings, we would note that the surrounding area is typical of the Chalklands LCA. In the wider area around the Site, the low-lying flood plain of the River Cam is evident, with the land rising gently between shallow river valleys. The land rises more steeply to the chalk hills to the northeast. Arable farmland dominates the wider landscape, with varying sized fields, and strips and larger areas of woodland characteristic. A number of settlements lie along transport corridors, as well as the rivers which run into Cambridge.

### **District Landscape Character**

- 3.12 South Cambridgeshire District Council ('SCDC') adopted the District Design Guide SPD in March 2010 as a means of providing guidance on the implementation of district wide and Area Action Plan policies relating to previous Development Plan documents. While these have been superseded, the SPD remains a material consideration when making planning decisions, insofar as it is consistent with the national planning guidance. In Chapter 3 of the Design Guide, the landscape character areas as set out in the Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines are expanded upon, to give a more detailed character assessment, which considers key characteristics of the landscape, settlement and built character, and design principles. The Site is located in the Chalklands LCA as identified in the county LCA. The following key landscape characteristics, as relevant to this assessment are identified as follows:

- *'A distinctive landform of smooth rolling chalk hills and gently undulating chalk plateau;*
- *A mostly large-scale arable landscape of arable fields, low hedges and few trees, giving it an open, spacious quality.*
- *Remnant of chalk grassland occurs on road verges and along tracks;*
- *Small beech copses on the brows of hills, and occasional shelterbelts, are important features.*
- *A wealth of historic and archaeological features, including; ancient trackways, earthworks, small chalk pits and pre-nineteenth century enclosures.*
- *Shallow valleys of the River Granta and River Rhee have a rich mosaic of grazing meadows and parkland.*
- *Lanes are often straight, occasionally 'dog-legging'. [and]*



- *Mostly strong rural character, though this is disrupted immediately adjacent to major roads such as the A505 and the M11.'*

3.13 Design Principles based on the characteristics identified, and of relevance to the Site and this assessment are as follows:

- *Maintain the distinctive settlement pattern of the area and its local context;*
- *Ensure any extensions to river valley villages are located along the line of the river, or at right angles to it, depending on the direction of the main transport route.*
- *Ensure density and pattern of new developments reflect that of existing villages and hamlets. Avoid backland and cul-de-sac developments where possible. [and]*
- *Retain hedges along roads.*

3.14 From our own assessment, the area in the closer vicinity of the Site broadly concurs with the assessment above. The landscape is influenced by the courses of the Rivers Cam and Granta, rising shallowly between the two rivers. Larger arable fields lie to the north and west of the Site, while to the south there are a number of small pastoral fields. These have strong field boundaries, which along with the strips and larger areas of woodland between arable fields, give a relatively well-wooded character.

### **Green Belt**

3.15 The Site lies within the Cambridge Green Belt, as shown on the MAGIC Map and Local Plan Extract in **Appendix D**.

### **Statutory and Non-Statutory Designations**

3.16 The Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside Map (MAGIC) and the Local Plan Proposals Map indicate that the Site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory designations for landscape character or quality.

3.17 As shown in **Appendix D**, the Site lies wholly within the Green Belt. There are some designated areas within the wider context of the Site, including Dernford Fen Site of Special Scientific Interest ('SSSI') approximately 0.5km from the Site boundary to the northwest.

### **Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings**

- 3.18 'Borough Hill large Multivallate Hillfort' Scheduled Monument lies approximately 230m to the west of the Site, beyond the A1301 and the railway line. There is no inter-visibility between this heritage asset and the Site.
- 3.19 There are no conservation areas adjoining, or within the immediate vicinity of the Site, however several exist within the surrounding area to the south. The two conservation areas closest to the Site boundary are Whittlesford Conservation Area, approximately 550m to the southwest, also beyond the A1301 road and the railway line, and Sawston Conservation Area, approximately 0.57km to the southeast. Each conservation area contains a number of listed buildings, and there are a limited number also located within the vicinity of the Site (see **Appendix D**), including the buildings associated with Sawston Village College, which are approximately 375m to the east of the Site, and 82, Mill Road, approximately 270m to the southeast. There is no inter-visibility between the Site and these heritage assets, or the conservation areas in which they are located.
- 3.20 Cambridge lies approximately 10km to the north of the Site. Given the intervening built development and vegetation, and undulating landscape there is no inter-visibility between Cambridge and the Site.

### **Public Rights of Way**

- 3.21 No public footpaths cross the Site or follow its internal or external boundaries.
- 3.22 The closest public footpath is FP196/15 which lies immediately to the west of the railway line, extending towards the northern edge of Whittlesford to the southwest.
- 3.23 A network of public footpaths extend off New Road and Mill Lane through the built up area of Sawston to the east and southeast of the Site. The closest of which is public footpath 196/20, which extends from Mill Lane to the east.
- 3.24 To the north of the Site, public footpath 196/2 crosses the A1301 road, extending to Cambridge Road to the east and a track which accesses Dernford House to the west.
- 3.25 Other public rights of way within the wider context of the Site are shown on the Site Location Plan at **Appendix A**.

### **Tree Preservation Orders**

- 3.26 The tree belt which extends north-south through the Site is covered by Tree Preservation Order ('TPO') 3/84/SC. This was confirmed by visiting the South Cambridgeshire online Planning Map on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

## 4.0 SITE DESCRIPTION AND VISIBILITY

### Site Description

- 4.1 The Site comprises two, broadly rectangular shaped arable fields, bisected by a tree belt which runs north-south through the Site and the Site also includes the majority of White Field Way. A post mounted line of over-head cables crosses the Site in a southwest to northeast orientation.
- 4.2 The northern boundary is comprised of a post and wire fence and a hedgerow, with some gaps to the west and a larger field entrance in the centre.
- 4.3 The majority of the western boundary comprises a post and rail fence, with a small section to the north comprising post and wire fencing. A 'gappy' hedgerow lines the fence in places along its length. The land falls away beyond this fence to the A1301 road, and the embankment is planted with intermittent hedgerow trees.
- 4.4 The eastern boundary is defined by a post and wire fence, with a line of trees along its length on the edge of the playing fields.
- 4.5 The southern boundary along Mill Lane on the western parcel comprises a post and rail fence. The southern boundary of the eastern parcel comprises a mix of fencing and vegetation. The western section of this boundary is marked by a post and wire fence, with a closeboard fence immediately adjacent to it, marking the rear gardens of numbers 1 to 4 White Fields Way. The eastern section is defined by sections of closeboard and larch lap fencing and post and wire fencing, with some vegetation along the outside of the post and wire sections.
- 4.6 A mainly intact post and wire fence extends along the western and eastern sides of the tree belt.

### Topography

- 4.7 The Site lies on land which gradually rises to the northeast. The 25m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) contour passes through the middle of the Site in a roughly north-south orientation.
- 4.8 Further to the north of the Site, the land continues to rise gradually. It reaches a small plateau at 30m AOD on Cambridge Road in the vicinity of the Sewage Works to the northeast, before falling towards the River Granta. Further to the northeast, beyond the river, the land rises to the Gog Magog Hills which are approximately 4km from the Site, and which lie between 65m and 75m AOD. These form part of a stretch of chalk hills

which wrap around the large lower-lying flood plain of the River Cam and its tributaries, including the River Granta.

- 4.9 To the south of the Site the land falls to this flood plain and the River Cam. The river lies at approximately 20m to 22m AOD, while beyond it, the land lies at typically between 35m and 40m AOD.

### **Visibility**

- 4.10 An assessment of the visibility of the Site was undertaken and a series of photographs taken from public vantage points, rights of way and public highways. The assessment was undertaken in the winter months, when visibility is least restricted. The viewpoints are illustrated on the Aerial Photograph and Site Location Plan contained in **Appendices A and B** and on the photographs in **Appendix C**.
- 4.11 The visual envelope of the Site is contained to the near vicinity to the west and south, as a result of the low-lying land and the well-treed field boundaries, while to the east, the adjoining settlement prevents views. Views are possible from the north, and there are longer distance views possible from a limited number of public vantage points to the northeast as the land rises.
- 4.12 The following section describes representative views of the Site from public vantage points in the vicinity.

#### Views from within the Site

- 4.13 There is a permissive footpath which extends through the tree belt, which allows, mainly filtered views of both parcels of the Site.

#### North

- 4.14 The ground plane of the Site is not visible from the A1301 road to the north due to the vegetation along the embankment (**photograph 13**).
- 4.15 From public footpath FP196/2 to the north, there are filtered views of the Site from the eastern side of the footpath, before the land falls to the west and views are screened by intervening vegetation (**photograph 14**).
- 4.16 There are some distant views of the Site from the southern parts of the recreational areas of the Magog Downs, although given the tree cover on the edge of Sawston, the interior of the Site cannot be distinguished with the naked eye. Where views towards the Site are possible, given the stature of the tree belt it can be identified (**photograph 15**).
- 4.17 There are longer distance views towards the Site over the hedgerow along Mile Road (also a Byway open to all traffic 'BOAT' Babraham 12/3)

to the northeast, as the land rises towards Copley Hill. Given the distance, while the buildings at Sawston Business Park are visible, the Site cannot be separately distinguished (**photograph 16**).

#### East

- 4.18 Views of the south western corner of the Site and the tree belt are possible for a short section of Mill Lane to the east, after which intervening development prevents views (**photograph 08**).
- 4.19 A similar view is possible from public footpath FP196/20, as it emerges from the existing development onto Mill Lane (**photograph 08**). For the rest of the footpath, existing built development prevents views.
- 4.20 Intervening built development prevents views from New Road.
- 4.21 There are views of the Site, and in particular the southern part of the tree belt from close to the junction of Mill Lane and White Field Way (**photograph 07**). There is also a filtered, framed view of the eastern parcel of the Site, from the end of White Field Way (similar view, though filtered as **photograph 04**).
- 4.22 There are views of the eastern parcel of the Site from the west facing windows and the playing fields of Sawston Village College (see reciprocal views from **photograph 02**), partly filtered by the trees along the boundary with the school.

#### South

- 4.23 The western parcel of the Site and the tree belt are visible for the section of Mill Lane, as it passes the Site (**photographs 05 and 06**).
- 4.24 The field boundaries to the south of the Site prevent views from the public vantage points further south. While partly filtered views are possible from the fields immediately to the south of the Site and Mill Lane, these are not publically accessible.
- 4.25 There are views of the eastern parcel of the Site from some of the residential properties adjoining it to the south on White Field Way and Belbin Way to the southeast (see reciprocal views from **photograph 02**). Boundary fencing blocks many of the views, but some views from rear windows are possible, where fencing and boundary vegetation allows.

#### West

- 4.26 The western parcel of the Site and the tree belt within it are visible from around the junction of the A1301 road and Mill Lane, and from a short section of the road either side of the level crossing, after which views are screened by intervening vegetation (**photographs 09, 10 and 11**).

- 4.27 Beyond the level crossing and as the access road to Sawston Business Park extends to the north, the vegetation along this road and along the railway line screens views.
- 4.28 Views from public footpath FP196/15, which extends between the railway line and Whittlesford, are highly filtered by intervening vegetation, with no views of the Site (**photograph 12**).

### **Landscape Quality, Value and Sensitivity**

- 4.29 The Site comprises two arable fields bisected by a tree belt on the north western edge of Sawston, and the Site also includes the majority of White Field Way. The Site's main landscape feature is the tree belt, with hedgerows along the northern and western boundaries. The tree belt comprises a continuous strip of three to four mature trees in depth, and is subject to a TPO. The belt forms a visible presence in the landscape, despite the well-wooded character to the west of the Site. On this basis, the tree belt is assessed as being of high landscape quality, with the remainder of the Site's boundary vegetation assessed as being of medium to low landscape quality.
- 4.30 The character of the Site exhibits similar qualities to that of the Chalklands LCA in which it lies, including being part of the undulating, shallow valley landscape between the rivers Cam and Granta. However, it is influenced by its proximity to the settlement edge, in particular the Village College to the east and the properties on White Field Way to Belbin Way to the south and southeast. A line of post-mounted overhead cables crosses the Site, the A1301 road extends along the western Site boundary and it is formed of two fields of undistinguished farmland. In addition, the railway line and Sawston Business Park lies a short distance to the west. Accordingly, the Site is assessed as being of overall medium landscape quality.
- 4.31 In terms of landscape value, the Site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory designation for landscape character or quality, nor is it identified under any policies for landscape character or quality within the adopted Local Plan. While there is a permissive footpath through the tree belt, the fields of the Site are not publically accessible. There are no heritage assets within or on the Site boundaries, and given the location of the Site, on the edge of the settlement with the A1301 extending close to its western boundary, it could not be reasonably considered tranquil or wild. Overall the Site is assessed as being of medium landscape value. On this basis we do not consider the Site to be, or form part of, a valued landscape for the purpose of paragraph 170 of the NPPF.
- 4.32 The landscape sensitivity of the Site to the proposed residential development is assessed based on the landscape's ability to

accommodate the change. The Site lies adjacent to the north western settlement edge of Sawston, to the north of the northern access road into the village. The Site lies close to the A1301 road, which provides a by-pass for the settlement and leads to the southern edge of Cambridge, with Sawston Business Park lying less than 300m to the northwest. As such, development at the Site would not be discordant with its surroundings. The tree belt, which bisects the Site is a strong landscape feature, and poses some constraints to development. However, with a sensitive scheme, this could be integrated into the new development and would remain an important landscape feature, marking the approach into Sawston. Accordingly, the Site is assessed as being of medium landscape sensitivity.

- 4.33 The wider landscape is fairly typical of the Chalklands LCA, but there is more woodland present in the vicinity of the Site, than in the wider landscape. The wider landscape is assessed as being of medium landscape quality, value and sensitivity.
- 4.34 The townscape in the vicinity of the Site comprises modern, 20<sup>th</sup> century housing, which is pleasant but with undistinguished features, and as such is assessed as being of medium townscape quality, value and sensitivity. Sawston Conservation Area is of high townscape quality, sensitivity and value, while the historic city of Cambridge to the north is of very high townscape quality, value, and sensitivity.



## **5.0 SUITABILITY OF THE SITE TO ACCOMMODATE DEVELOPMENT**

5.1 This section provides a brief appraisal of the ability of the Site to accommodate development, in terms of the landscape and visual constraints and effects. It then considers the implications of releasing the land from the Green Belt in relation to the five National purposes.

5.2 The Site is being promoted for residential development through the emerging joint Local Plan. Key landscape and visual principles which should be taken into consideration within any design proposals are as follows:

- Retention of the north-south tree belt, with housing set back from, and fronting onto it, and limited breaches for vehicular access;
- Retention of an open view towards the southern part of the tree belt from the junction of the A1301 road and Mill Lane, to recognise its importance at the edge of the settlement, with buildings set back behind this edge;
- Strengthening of the northern and western boundaries to provide a strong, vegetated edge to the development and to complement the existing tree belt;
- New planting on the eastern boundary to provide further filtering views from the playing fields;
- Proposed built form to be predominantly 2 storeys in height with some limited 2.5 storey housing, reflecting the edge of settlement location and existing adjoining housing; and
- Development to be set back from the western boundary of the Site to provide a sensitive edge to the countryside.

### **Relationship to Existing Development**

5.3 The Site is bound to the east by the settlement edge of Sawston, which includes Sawston Village College and its playing fields which adjoin the Site. The Site would extend no further north than the playing fields, and although it would extend the settlement to the west, development would be contained by the A1301 road. Development of the Site, would therefore represent a contained extension to the north western edge of Sawston.

## **Impact of Releasing the Site from the Green Belt**

- 5.4 The most relevant non-policy guidance in relation to Green Belt is published by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS), Planning on the Doorstep: the Big Issues – Green Belt (2015). The following section has been informed by this guidance and by past experience.
- 5.5 The assessment below covers the first four Green Belt purposes as set out in paragraph 134 of the NPPF. It then considers the appropriateness of the redefined Green Belt boundary against paragraph 139 of the NPPF. The assessment excludes the fifth purpose as it is considered that if the Green Belt achieves this purpose, then all Green Belt land performs this function to the same extent. This is supported by the PAS guidance, which states that the application of this purpose is unlikely to distinguish differences in contribution to Green Belt.
- 5.6 There is no published Green Belt assessment of this land.

*To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas*

- 5.7 The Site is well related to the settlement edge to the east, wrapping around the existing urban edge which extends to the northwest. The A1301 road to the west, Mill Lane to the south and the field boundary to the north provide containment to further potential urban extension. In addition, the Site would not extend further north than the playing fields of the Village College. New tree and hedgerow planting along the western and northern edges would strengthen these boundaries, and would provide a robust alternative Green Belt boundary. Planned development in this location would be compatible with surrounding land uses and would not result in sprawl.

*To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another*

- 5.8 In terms of neighbouring towns merging, the nearest settlement is Whittlesford, which lies to the southwest. It is located beyond the A1301 road, the railway line, the River Cam and a number of agricultural fields. The potential release of the Site would result in a marginal reduction in the separation between the two settlements. A substantial area would remain and, given the location of the Site vis-à-vis Whittlesford and the extent of tree cover between them, the change therefore would not lead to the physical or perceived coalescence of these settlements.

*To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment*

- 5.9 The Site lies to the east of the A1301 road and north of Mill Lane, with north western settlement edge indented into, and adjoining it. This results in the land having an urban edge character, which is influenced by

adjacent land uses. The Site therefore performs less well against this purpose than the wider open countryside to the north. Given this and the clearly identifiable boundaries within which development would site, its planned release from the Green Belt for development would not result in encroachment into the wider countryside.

*To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns*

- 5.10 The Site does not adjoin a Conservation Area, nor is it in close vicinity to one, and there is no inter-visibility between the Site and Cambridge. As such the release of this land from the Green Belt would not affect the setting or special character of any historic town.
- 5.11 In summary, the Site could be released from the Green Belt without compromising National Green Belt purposes.
- 5.12 Paragraph 139 of the NPPF relates to the redefinition of Green Belt boundaries in Local Plans. The Site's boundaries are clearly defined and are likely to be recognisable and permanent. Additional strengthening of these boundaries through tree and hedgerow planting, in particular to the north would provide a robust boundary between the redefined settlement edge and the wider Green Belt.

### **Landscape Features**

- 5.13 The Site comprises two arable fields, bisected by a tree belt. The tree belt is the key landscape feature of the Site and this should be retained, subject to limited and necessary breaches within any development proposals to permit access.
- 5.14 By retaining the tree belt and sensitively incorporating it into the Site, this feature can remain a visible component of the approach into the village. Where vegetation removal is required to facilitate access between the two parcels of the Site, this should be informed by a tree survey and should, as far as is practical, utilise existing breaks or less well vegetated areas. New tree and hedgerow planting should also be provided along the northern and western Site boundaries to strengthen what will become the north westernmost edge of the settlement. Strengthening of the eastern boundary will provide further screening of the development proposals from the school and the playing fields in particular. In addition, strengthening the northern boundary will soften views of the development where views are possible from the north.

### **Visibility**

- 5.15 The visual appraisal in Section 4 identifies that the Site is generally well contained from the wider landscape by established vegetation. Where the Site is visible, views are within the near vicinity, with some limited

opportunities for views towards the Site from the northeast. The following provides a summary of the likely views resulting from development of the Site, assuming the principles set out in section 5.2 are adopted.

#### Views from within the Site

- 5.16 Views of the new housing would be visible along the permissive footpath through the tree belt, filtered by the trees.

#### North

- 5.17 Rooftops of the new housing would be seen over the existing planting on the embankment to the north of the Site. Planting along the western Site boundary would further filter these views.
- 5.18 From the eastern side of public footpath FP196/2 to the north, the housing would be seen over the existing northern boundary hedgerow, with new planting filtering views as it establishes. As the footpath falls towards, and crosses the A1301 road, views of the new housing would become filtered and then screened by intervening vegetation.
- 5.19 In longer distance views from the northeast on the Magog Downs, the rooftops of the new housing, when newly constructed would be able to be distinguished, partly filtered by the tree belt through the Site. As these weather, and the new planting on the northern boundary establishes, views would become more filtered.
- 5.20 In longer distance views from Mile Road (BOAT Babraham 12/3), the housing at the Site would not be readily distinguishable, given the distance and the intervening vegetation.

#### East

- 5.21 From Mill Lane to the east, where views of the new housing are possible, they would be heavily filtered by the tree belt within the Site.
- 5.22 A similar view would be possible from public footpath FP196/20, as it emerges from the existing development onto Mill Lane to the east.
- 5.23 Heavily filtered views of the new housing would be possible from the southern part of White Field Way, before the existing housing prevents further views. The new housing would be seen between the bungalows on the southern edge of the Site, and filtered by the vegetation at the eastern end of White Field Way.
- 5.24 Views of the new housing in the eastern side of the Site would be possible from the west facing windows and the playing fields of Sawston Village College, partly filtered by the trees along the boundary with the school. New planting along this boundary would add further filtering to this view.

### South

- 5.25 As Mill Lane passes the southern Site boundary, new housing in the western Site parcel would be visible, set back behind an area of public open space, allowing the tree belt to continue to be read as an integral part of the northern approach into Sawston.
- 5.26 Views of the new housing in the western parcel would be visible from the private land immediately to the south of Mill Lane, becoming increasingly filtered further south due to well-vegetated field boundaries.
- 5.27 Where boundary fencing and vegetation allow views, the new housing in the eastern parcel would be seen from the windows of properties which face the Site on White Field Way and Belbin Way to the southeast. Views of the new housing in the western parcel, where these are possible, would be highly filtered by the tree belt and seen obliquely.

### West

- 5.28 There would be views of the new housing in the western Site parcel from the vicinity of the junction of the A1301 road and Mill Lane, and further to the west, from a short section of the road either side of the level crossing. Beyond this, views are screened by intervening vegetation. In these views the housing would be seen set back from the Mill Lane, with the tree belt retained.
- 5.29 Similar, but fleeting views would be possible from the train as it passes the level crossing, before intervening vegetation prevents views.
- 5.30 Due to the well-treed landscape to the west of the Site, there would be no views of the new housing from the access road to Sawston Business Park, or from the majority of the public footpath FP196/15, which extends between the railway line and Whittlesford.

## **Landscape Character and Quality**

- 5.31 As set out in Section 4, the Site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory designations for landscape character or quality, although the tree belt through the centre of the Site is covered by a TPO. The Site is assessed as being of medium landscape quality, value and sensitivity.
- 5.32 The Site is well related to the north western urban edge of Sawston and the proposed development would read as an extension to this urban area. It is anticipated that the majority of the Site's existing tree belt could be retained and incorporated into a green infrastructure corridor within a sensitively designed layout. The new housing should be set back from the western boundary to respect the topography of the Site and the adjoining area and the proposals should include an area of tree and

hedgerow planting to establish a new vegetated boundary to the west. Likewise, the new housing should be set back from the northern boundary, behind the existing hedgerow, augmented with new planting, to respect the open landscape to the north. These proposals should incorporate new landscaping and areas of open space for both amenity and biodiversity value.

- 5.33 In summary, by adopting the landscape principles as set out above, we consider that appropriate landscape led proposals can be accommodated on the Site without resulting in material harm to the wider landscape and visual character.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

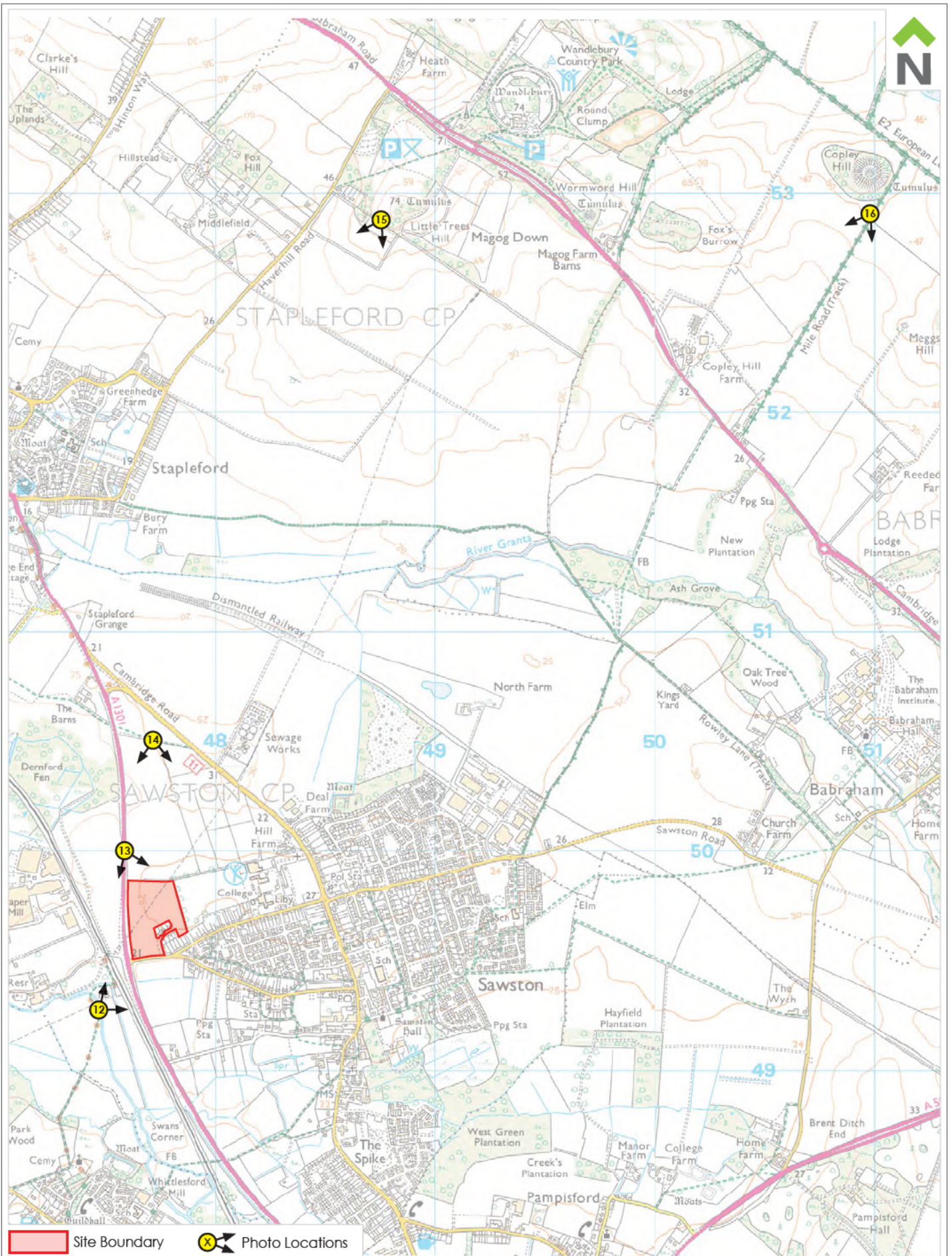
- 6.1 The Site is located on the north western settlement edge of Sawston, with residential properties on White Field Way and Belbin Way located to the immediate southeast. The playing fields of Sawston Village College adjoin the Site to the east, with the buildings of the school beyond the playing fields. The Site is bound to the west by the A1301 road and to the south by Mill Lane. Open arable land lies beyond the northern boundary.
- 6.2 The Site comprises two arable fields, bisected by a tree belt, and the majority of White Fields Way. The Site boundaries are generally marked by post and wire fencing, although for the majority of the western boundary this gives way to post and rail fencing. Hedgerows, with some gaps mark the northern field boundary. The rest of the vegetation close to the Site boundaries, mainly comprising trees, lie outside the extent of the Site. The tree belt is the key landscape feature of the Site and is covered by a TPO. The Site is assessed as being of overall medium landscape quality, value and sensitivity.
- 6.3 The Site is generally well contained from its wider surroundings by established vegetation within the wider landscape. Where views are possible, these are limited to the near vicinity of the Site, with some opportunities for more distant views towards the Site from the northeast. Near distance views can be experienced from short sections of Mill Lane, from close to its junction on the A1301 road and from White Field Way. Views are limited to sections of the public footpaths in the immediate vicinity to the north and east, but from the southwest, views are screened by intervening vegetation. In distant views from the higher land at the Magog Downs to the northeast, the tree belt can be distinguished, but the interior of the Site is not visible. Nor is the Site separately identifiable in views from the northeast on Mile Road (also BOAT Babraham 12/3).
- 6.4 The Site lies within the Green Belt and adjoins the existing settlement boundary to the immediate east and southeast. The existing Green Belt boundary in this vicinity could be redefined along the Site's northern, western and southern boundaries, and given the A1301 road to the west, this could form a more robust and long term defensible Green Belt boundary.
- 6.5 The assessment also sets out key landscape principles which should be taken into account within development proposals. These include the sensitive incorporation of the north-south tree belt into the development proposals, to form a key area of green infrastructure within the Site. Proposals should also set the housing back from the western and northern edges of the Site to respect the wider landscape character and the edge of settlement location of the Site. The permissive footpath

through the tree belt should be retained and incorporated into new pedestrian routes through the Site. By adopting these landscape principles, the Site can be developed without resulting in material harm to the surrounding landscape and visual character.



## **Appendix A**

Site Location Plan



**Project** Land north of Mill Lane Sawston

**Drawing Title** Site Location Plan

**Client** Carter Jonas

**Drawing No.** CSA/4632/100

**Scale @ A4** NTS

**Date** February 2020

**Rev**

**Drawn**

**Checked**

## **Appendix B**

Aerial Photograph



 Site Boundary       Photo Locations



Project Land north of Mill Lane Sawston

Date February 2020

Drawing No. CSA/4632/101

Drawing Title Aerial Photograph

Scale @ A4 NTS

Rev -

Client Carter Jonas

Drawn SP

Checked JJ

## **Appendix C**

Photosheets

Sawston Business Park



View from the northern Site boundary looking southwest **Photograph 01**

Sawston Village College

Properties on Belbin Way

Properties on White Field Way



View from the northern Site boundary looking southeast **Photograph 02**



Project	Land north of Mill Lane Sawston	Drawing No.	CSA/4632/102	Rev	-
Drawing Title	Photosheets	Date	February 2020		
Client	Carter Jonas	Drawn	SP	Checked	JJ



View from the eastern side of the tree belt looking northeast into eastern Site parcel **Photograph 03**



View from eastern edge of White Field Way looking northeast **Photograph 04**



<b>Project</b>	Land north of Mill Lane Sawston	<b>Drawing No.</b>	CSA/4632/102	<b>Rev</b>	-
<b>Drawing Title</b>	Photosheets	<b>Date</b>	February 2020		
<b>Client</b>	Carter Jonas	<b>Drawn</b>	SP	<b>Checked</b>	JJ



View from the southern Site boundary looking northwest **Photograph 05**



View from the southern Site boundary looking northeast **Photograph 06**

<b>Project</b>	Land north of Mill Lane Sawston	<b>Drawing No.</b>	CSA/4632/102	<b>Rev -</b>
<b>Drawing Title</b>	Photosheets	<b>Date</b>	February 2020	
<b>Client</b>	Carter Jonas	<b>Drawn</b>	SP	<b>Checked</b> JJ



Tree belt within Site

White Field Way

Property on White Field Way



View from White Field Way looking northwest **Photograph 07**

Mill Lane

Tree belt within Site



View from Mill Lane and the western end of public footpath FP196/20 looking west **Photograph 08**



<b>Project</b>	Land north of Mill Lane Sawston	<b>Drawing No.</b>	CSA/4632/102	<b>Rev</b>	-
<b>Drawing Title</b>	Photosheets	<b>Date</b>	February 2020		
<b>Client</b>	Carter Jonas	<b>Drawn</b>	SP	<b>Checked</b>	JJ



View from the A1301 road, southwest of the Site looking north **Photograph 09**



View from the A1301 road, opposite the junction with Mill Lane looking northeast **Photograph 10**



View from the road leading to Sawston Business Park to the east of the level crossing, looking east **Photograph 11**



View from public footpath Sawston FP196/15 looking across the River Cam towards the Site to the northeast (Site is not visible) **Photograph 12**



<b>Project</b>	Land north of Mill Lane Sawston	<b>Drawing No.</b>	CSA/4632/102	<b>Rev</b>	-
<b>Drawing Title</b>	Photosheets	<b>Date</b>	February 2020		
<b>Client</b>	Carter Jonas	<b>Drawn</b>	SP	<b>Checked</b>	JJ



View from the A1301 road to the northwest looking south towards the Site **Photograph 13**



View from public footpath Sawston FP196/2 to the north looking south towards the Site **Photograph 14**



<b>Project</b>	Land north of Mill Lane Sawston	<b>Drawing No.</b> CSA/4632/102	<b>Rev</b> -
<b>Drawing Title</b>	Photosheets	<b>Date</b> February 2020	
<b>Client</b>	Carter Jonas	<b>Drawn</b> SP	<b>Checked</b> JJ



View from the Magog Downs looking southwest towards the Site **Photograph 15**



View from Mile Road (Byway open to all traffic Babraham 12/3) looking southwest towards the Site **Photograph 16**

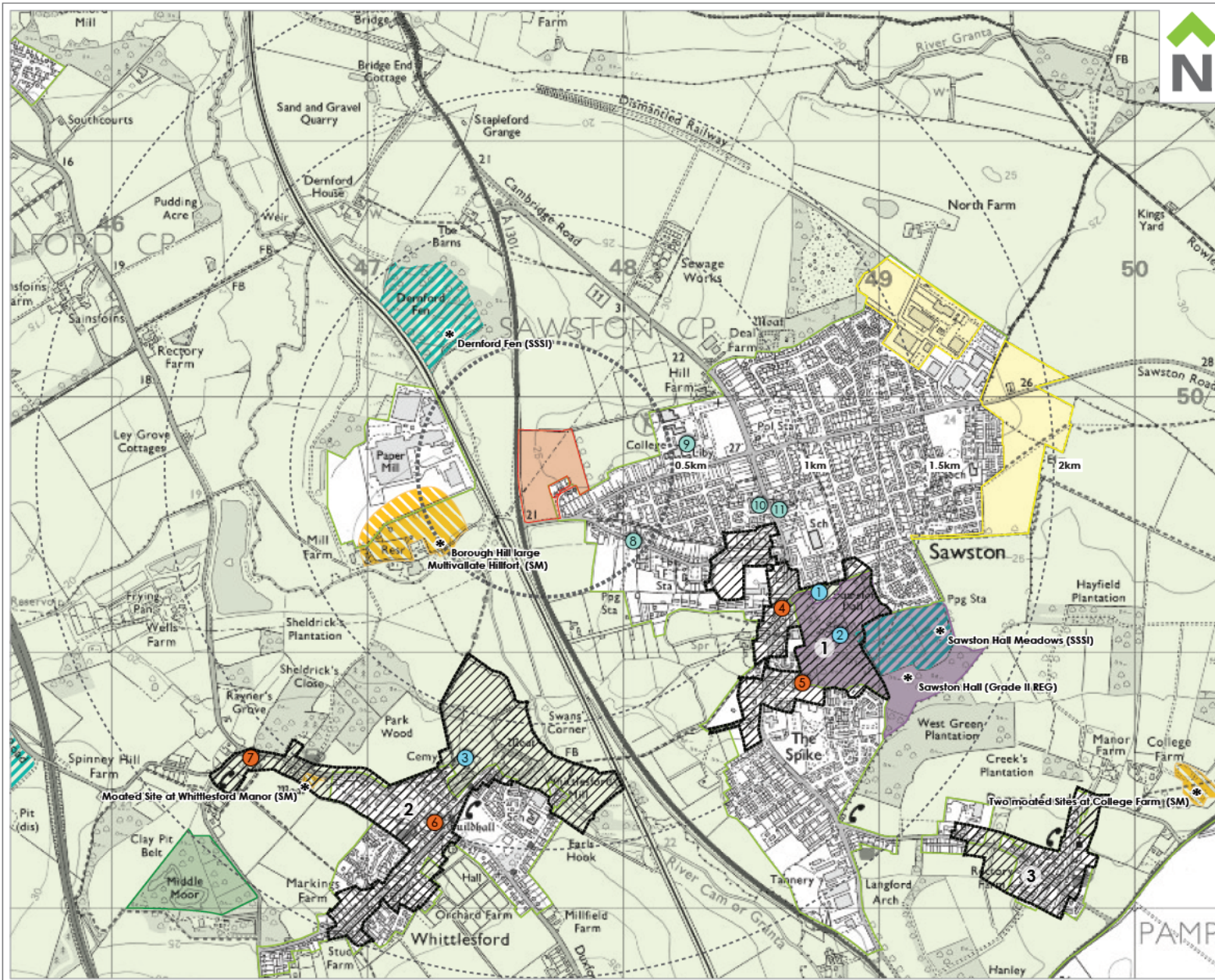


<b>Project</b>	Land north of Mill Lane Sawston	<b>Drawing No.</b>	CSA/4632/102	<b>Rev</b>	-
<b>Drawing Title</b>	Photosheets	<b>Date</b>	February 2020		
<b>Client</b>	Carter Jonas	<b>Drawn</b>	SP	<b>Checked</b>	JJ

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## **Appendix D**

### MAGIC Map and Heritage Information



- Site Boundary
- Green Belt
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Scheduled Monuments (SM)
- Registered Parks and Gardens (REG)
- Conservation Areas
  1. Sawston
  2. Whittlesford
  3. Pampisford
- X Grade I Listed Buildings & Structures within 1.5km
  1. Parish Church of St Mary
  2. Sawston Hall
  3. Parish Church of St Mary and St Andrew
- X Grade II\* Listed Buildings & Structures within 1.5km
  4. Queen's Head Inn
  5. Great Eastern Drying Shed Tannery Building
  6. The Guildhall
  7. Rayners Farmhouse
- X Grade II Listed Buildings & Structures within 1.5km (Outside Conservation Areas)
  8. 82, Mill Lane
  9. Group of 5: Sawston Village College, Associated Library, Garden Ornament at Centre of Open Court, Fountain at Centre of Courtyard, College House
  10. The Greyhound Public House
  11. Kings Head Public House

**South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 Adopted Policies Map**

- Housing Allocation (Policy H/1 (a-h))
- County Wildlife Site (Policy NH/5)



Project	Land North of Mill Lane Sawston
Drawing Title	MAGIC Map Extract & Heritage Plan
Client	Carter Jonas

Date	December 2019	Drawing No.	CSA/4632/103
Scale @ A4	NTS	Rev	-
Drawn	JB	Checked	JJ



## **Appendix E**

Methodology

## METHODOLOGY FOR LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

- M1 In landscape and visual impact assessment, a distinction is normally drawn between **landscape/townscape effects** (i.e. effects on the character or quality of the landscape (or townscape), irrespective of whether there are any views of the landscape, or viewers to see them) and **visual effects** (i.e. effects on people's views of the landscape, principally from public rights of way and areas with public access, but also private views from residential properties). Thus, a development may have extensive landscape effects but few visual effects if, for example, there are no properties or public viewpoints nearby. Or alternatively, few landscape effects but substantial visual effects if, for example, the landscape is already degraded or the development is not out of character with it, but can clearly be seen from many residential properties and/or public areas.
- M2 The assessment of landscape & visual effects is less amenable to scientific or statistical analysis than some environmental topics and inherently contains an element of subjectivity. However, the assessment should still be undertaken in a logical, consistent and rigorous manner, based on experience and judgement, and any conclusions should be able to demonstrate a clear rationale. To this end, various guidelines have been published, the most relevant of which, for assessments of the effects of a development, rather than of the character or quality of the landscape itself, form the basis of the assessment and are as follows:
- 'Guidelines for Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment', produced jointly by the Institute of Environmental Assessment and the Landscape Institute (GLVIA 3<sup>rd</sup> edition 2013); and
  - 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment', October 2014 (Christine Tudor, Natural England) to which reference is also made. This stresses the need for a holistic assessment of landscape character, including physical, biological and social factors.

### LANDSCAPE/TOWNSCAPE EFFECTS

- M3 Landscape/townscape quality is a subjective judgement based on the condition and characteristics of a landscape/townscape. It will often be informed by national, regional or local designations made upon it in respect of its quality e.g. AONB. Sensitivity relates to the inherent value placed on a landscape / townscape and the ability of that landscape/townscape to accommodate change.

Landscape sensitivity can vary with:

- (i) *existing land uses;*
- (ii) *the pattern and scale of the landscape;*
- (iii) *visual enclosure/openness of views, and distribution of visual receptors;*
- (iv) *susceptibility to change;*
- (v) *the scope for mitigation, which would be in character with the existing landscape; and*
- (vi) *the condition and value placed on the landscape.*

- M4 The concept of landscape/townscape value is considered in order to avoid consideration only of how scenically attractive an area may be, and thus to avoid

undervaluing areas of strong character but little scenic beauty. In the process of making this assessment, the following factors, among others, are considered with relevance to the site in question: landscape quality (condition), scenic quality, rarity, representativeness, conservation interest, recreation value, perceptual aspects and associations.

- M5 Nationally valued landscapes are recognised by designation, such as National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty ('AONB') which have particular planning policies applied to them. Nationally valued townscapes are typically those covered by a Conservation Area or similar designation. Paragraph 170 of the current NPPF outlines that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes '*...in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan*'.
- M6 There is a strong inter-relationship between landscape/townscape quality, value and sensitivity as high quality/value landscapes/townscapes usually have a low ability to accommodate change.
- M7 For the purpose of our assessment, landscape/townscape quality, value and sensitivity is assessed using the criteria in Tables LE1 and LE2. Typically, landscapes/townscapes which carry a quality designation and which are otherwise attractive or unspoilt will in general be more sensitive, while those which are less attractive or already affected by significant visual detractors and disturbance will be generally less sensitive.
- M8 The magnitude of change is the scale, extent and duration of change to a landscape arising from the proposed development and was assessed using the criteria in Table LE3.
- M9 Landscape/townscape effects were assessed in terms of the interaction between the magnitude of the change brought about by the development and the quality, value & sensitivity of the landscape resource affected. The landscape/townscape effects can be either beneficial, adverse or neutral. Landscape effects can be direct (i.e. impact on physical features, e.g. landform, vegetation, watercourses etc.), or indirect (i.e. impact on landscape character as a result of the introduction of new elements within the landscape). Direct visual effects result from changes to existing views.
- M10 In this way, landscapes/townscapes of the highest sensitivity, when subjected to a high magnitude of change from the proposed development, are likely to give rise to 'substantial' landscape/townscape effects which can be either adverse or beneficial. Conversely, landscapes of low sensitivity, when subjected to a low magnitude of change from the proposed development, are likely to give rise to only 'slight' or neutral landscape effects. Beneficial landscape effects may arise from such things as the creation of new landscape features, changes to management practices and improved public access. For the purpose of this assessment the landscape/townscape effects have been judged at completion of the development and in year 15. This approach acknowledges that landscape/townscape effects can reduce as new planting/mitigation measures become established and achieve their intended objectives.

## **VISUAL EFFECTS**

- M11 Visual effects are concerned with people's views of the landscape/townscape and the change that will occur. Like landscape effects, viewers or receptors are categorised by their sensitivity. For example, views from private dwellings are generally of a higher sensitivity than those from places of work.

- M12 In describing the content of a view the following terms are used:
- No view - no views of the development;
  - Glimpse - a fleeting or distant view of the development, often in the context of wider views of the landscape;
  - Partial - a clear view of part of the development only;
  - Filtered - views to the development which are partially screened, usually by intervening vegetation - the degree of filtering may change with the seasons;
  - Open - a clear view to the development.
- M13 The sensitivity of the receptor varies according to its susceptibility to a particular type of change, or the value placed on it (e.g. views from a recognised beauty spot will have a greater sensitivity). Visual sensitivity was assessed using the criteria in Table VE1.
- M14 The magnitude of change is the degree in which the view(s) may be altered as a result of the proposed development and will generally decrease with distance from its source, until a point is reached where there is no discernible change. The magnitude of change in regard to the views was assessed using the criteria in Table VE2.
- M15 Visual effects were then assessed in terms of the interaction between the magnitude of the change brought about by the development and also the sensitivity of the visual receptor affected.
- M16 As with landscape effects, a high sensitivity receptor, when subjected to a high magnitude of change from the proposed development, is likely to experience 'substantial' visual effects which can be either adverse or beneficial. Conversely, receptors of low sensitivity, when subjected to a slight magnitude of change from the proposed development, are likely to experience only 'slight' or neutral visual effects, which can be either beneficial or adverse.
- M17 Photographs were taken with a digital camera with a lens that approximates to 50mm, to give a similar depth of view to the human eye. In some cases images have been joined together to form a panorama. The prevailing weather and atmospheric conditions, and any effects on visibility are noted.
- M18 Unless specific slab levels of buildings have been specified, the assessment has assumed that slab levels will be within 750mm of existing ground level.

#### **MITIGATION AND RESIDUAL EFFECTS**

- M19 Mitigation measures are described as those measures, including any process or activity, designed to avoid, reduce and compensate for adverse landscape and/or visual effects resulting from the proposed development.
- M20 In situations where proposed mitigation measures are likely to change over time, as with planting to screen a development, it is important to make a distinction between any likely effects that will arise in the short-term and those that will occur in the long-term or 'residual effects' once mitigation measures have established. In this assessment, the visual effects of the development have been considered at completion of the entire project and at 15 years thereafter.
- M21 Mitigation measures can have a residual, positive impact on the effects arising from a development, whereas the short-term impact may be adverse.

## **ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS**

- M22 The assessment concisely considers and describes the main landscape/townscape and visual effects resulting from the proposed development. The narrative text demonstrates the reasoning behind judgements concerning the landscape and visual effects of the proposals. Where appropriate, the text is supported by tables which summarise the sensitivity of the views/landscape/townscape, the magnitude of change and describe any resulting effects.

## **CUMULATIVE EFFECTS**

- M23 Cumulative effects are *'the additional changes caused by a proposed development in conjunction with other similar developments or as the combined effect of a set of developments, taken together.'*
- M24 In carrying out landscape assessment it is for the author to form a judgement on whether or not it is necessary to consider any planned developments and to form a judgement on how these could potentially affect a project.

## **ZONE OF THEORETICAL VISIBILITY (ZTV)**

- M25 A ZTV map can help to determine the potential visibility of the site and identify those locations where development at the site is likely to be most visible from the surrounding area. Where a ZTV is considered appropriate for a proposed development the following methodology is used.
- M26 The process is in two stages, and for each, a digital terrain model ('DTM') using Key TERRA-FIRMA computer software is produced and mapped onto an OS map. The DTM is based on Ordnance Survey Landform Profile tiles, providing a digital record of existing landform across the UK, based on a 10 metre grid. There is the potential for minor discrepancies between the DTM and the actual landform where there are topographic features that are too small to be picked up by the 10 metre grid. A judgement will be made to determine the extent of the study area based on the specific site and the nature of the proposed change, and the reasons for the choice will be set out in the report. The study area will be determined by local topography but is typically set at 7.5km.
- M27 Different heights are then assigned to significant features, primarily buildings and woodland, thus producing the first stage of an 'existing' ZTV illustrating the current situation of the site and surrounding area. This data is derived from OS Open Map Data, and verified during the fieldwork, with any significant discrepancies in the data being noted and the map adjusted accordingly. Fieldwork is confined to accessible parts of the site, public rights of way, the highway network and other publicly accessible areas.
- M28 The second stage is to produce a 'proposed' ZTV with the same base as the 'existing' ZTV. The proposed development is introduced into the model as either a representative spot height, or a series of heights, and a viewer height of 1.7m is used. Illustrating the visual envelope of the proposed development within the specific site.
- M29 The model is based on available data and fieldwork and therefore may not take into account all development or woodland throughout the study area, nor the effect of smaller scale planting or hedgerows. It also does not take into account areas of recent or continuous topographic change from, for instance, mining operations.

Table LE 1

LANDSCAPE / TOWNSCAPE QUALITY AND VALUE

	Very High	High	Medium	Low
<p>Description of Landscape/Townscape Quality and Value</p>	<p><b>Landscape Quality:</b> Intact and very attractive landscape which may be nationally recognised/designated for its scenic beauty. e.g. National Park Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or World Heritage Site.</p> <p><b>Townscape Quality:</b> A townscape of very high quality which is unique in its character and recognised nationally/internationally e.g. World Heritage Site</p> <p><b>Value:</b> Very high quality landscape or townscape with Statutory Designation for landscape/townscape quality/ value e.g. National Park World Heritage Site Registered Park or Garden. Contains rare elements or significant cultural/historical associations.</p>	<p><b>Landscape Quality:</b> A landscape usually combining varied topography historic features and few visual detractors. A landscape known and cherished by many people from across the region. e.g. County Landscape Site such as a Special Landscape Area.</p> <p><b>Townscape Quality:</b> A well designed townscape of high quality with a locally recognised and distinctive character e.g. Conservation Area</p> <p><b>Value:</b> High quality landscape/townscape or lower quality landscape with un-fettered public access (e.g. commons public park) or with strong cultural associations. May have important views out to landmarks/designated landscapes and few detracting features. May possess perceptual qualities of tranquility or wildness.</p>	<p><b>Landscape Quality:</b> Non-designated landscape area generally pleasant but with no distinctive features often displaying relatively ordinary characteristics. May have detracting features.</p> <p><b>Townscape Quality:</b> A typical pleasant townscape with a coherent urban form but with no distinguishing features or designation for quality.</p> <p><b>Value:</b> An ordinary landscape/townscape of local value which may have some detracting features. No recognised statutory designations for landscape/townscape quality. A landscape which may have limited public access and/ or have pleasant views out or be visible in public views.</p>	<p><b>Landscape / Townscape Quality:</b> Unattractive or degraded landscape/townscape affected by numerous detracting elements e.g. industrial areas infrastructure routes and un-restored mineral extractions.</p> <p><b>Value:</b> Landscape/townscape generally of lower quality. A landscape with limited public access no designations or recognised cultural significance. Limited public views.</p>

Table LE 2

LANDSCAPE / TOWNSCAPE SENSITIVITY

	Very High	High	Medium	Low
Description of Sensitivity	<p>A landscape/townscape with a very low ability to accommodate change such as a nationally designated landscape.</p>	<p>A landscape/townscape with limited ability to accommodate change because such change may lead to some loss of valuable features or elements. Development of the type proposed could potentially be discordant with the character of the landscape/townscape.</p>	<p>A landscape/townscape with reasonable ability to accommodate change. Change may lead to a limited loss of some features or characteristics. Development of the type proposed would not be discordant with the character of the landscape/townscape.</p>	<p>A landscape/townscape with good ability to accommodate change. Change would not lead to a significant loss of features or characteristics and there would be no significant loss of character or quality. Development of the type proposed would not be discordant with the landscape/townscape in which it is set and may result in a beneficial change.</p>

**Table LE 3 LANDSCAPE / TOWNSCAPE MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE**

	Substantial	Moderate	Slight	Negligible	Neutral
<b>Description of the Change predicted</b>	Total loss of or significant impact on key characteristics features or elements				
	Partial loss of or impact on key characteristics features or elements				
	Minor loss of or alteration to one or more key landscape/ townscape characteristics features or elements				
	Very minor loss or alteration to one or more key landscape/ townscape characteristics features or elements				
	No loss or alteration of key landscape/ townscape characteristics features or elements				

**Table LE 4 LANDSCAPE / TOWNSCAPE EFFECTS**

	Substantial	Moderate	Slight	Negligible	Neutral
<b>Description of the Effect</b>	<p>The proposals will alter the landscape/ townscape in that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>will result in substantial change in the character landform scale and pattern of the landscape/townscape</li> <li>are visually intrusive and would disrupt important views</li> <li>are likely to impact on the integrity of a range of characteristic features and elements and their setting</li> <li>will impact a high quality or highly vulnerable landscape</li> <li>cannot be adequately mitigated.</li> </ul>				
	<p>The proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>noticeably change the character scale and pattern of the landscape/townscape</li> <li>may have some impacts on a landscape/townscape of recognised quality or on vulnerable and important characteristic features or elements.</li> <li>are a noticeable element in key views</li> <li>not possible to fully mitigate.</li> </ul>				
	<p>The proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>do not quite fit the landform and scale of the landscape/townscape and will result in relatively minor changes to existing landscape character</li> <li>will impact on certain views into and across the area</li> <li>mitigation will reduce the impact of the proposals but some minor residual effects will remain.</li> </ul>				
	<p>The proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>complement the scale landform and pattern of the landscape/townscape</li> <li>development may occupy only a relatively small part of the Site</li> <li>maintain the majority of landscape features</li> <li>incorporates measures for mitigation to ensure the scheme will blend in well with the landscape/townscape and mitigates any loss of vegetation.</li> </ul>				
	<p>The proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>maintain existing landscape/townscape character</li> <li>has no impact on landscape features such as trees hedgerows watercourses etc.</li> <li>utilises a highly degraded landscape or brownfield site.</li> </ul>				

**Footnote:**

1. Each level (other than neutral) of change identified can be either regarded as 'beneficial' or 'adverse'. The above table relates to adverse landscape effects however where proposals complement or enhance landscape character these will have a comparable range of beneficial landscape effects.



Table VE 1

VISUAL SENSITIVITY

	High	Medium	Low
Description of the Receptor	<p>Residential properties with predominantly open views from windows garden or curtilage. Views will normally be from ground and first floors and from two or more windows of rooms mainly in use during the day.</p> <p>Users of Public Rights of Way in sensitive or generally unspoilt areas.</p> <p>Predominantly non-motorised users of minor or unclassified roads in the countryside.</p> <p>Views from within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty National Park World Heritage Site or Conservation Area and views for visitors to recognised viewpoints or beauty spots.</p> <p>Users of outdoor recreational facilities with predominantly open views where the purpose of that recreation is enjoyment of the countryside - e.g. Country Parks National Trust or other access land etc.</p>	<p>Residential properties with partial views from windows garden or curtilage. Views will normally be from first floor windows only or an oblique view from one ground floor window or may be partially obscured by garden or other intervening vegetation.</p> <p>Users of Public Rights of Way in less sensitive areas or where there are significant existing intrusive features.</p> <p>Users of outdoor recreational facilities with restricted views or where the purpose of that recreation is incidental to the view e.g. sports fields.</p> <p>Schools and other institutional buildings and their outdoor areas.</p> <p>Users of minor or unclassified roads in the countryside whether motorised or not.</p>	<p>People in their place of work.</p> <p>Users of main roads or passengers in public transport on main routes.</p> <p>Users of outdoor recreational facilities with restricted views and where the purpose of that recreation is unrelated to the view e.g. go-karting track.</p>

Table VE 2

VISUAL MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE

	Substantial	Moderate	Slight	Negligible	Neutral
Description of the Change predicted	Large and dominating changes which affect a substantial part of the view.				
		Clearly perceptible and noticable changes within a significant proportion of the view.			
			Small changes to existing views either as a minor component of a wider view or smaller changes over a larger proportion of the view(s).		
				Very minor changes over a small proportion of the view(s).	
					No discernible change to the view(s).

Table VE 3

VISUAL EFFECTS

	Substantial	Moderate	Slight	Negligible	Neutral
Description of the Effects	The proposals would have a significant impact on a view from a receptor of medium sensitivity or less damage (or improvement) to a view from a highly sensitive receptor and would be an obvious or dominant element in the view.				
		The proposals would impact on a view from a medium sensitive receptor or less harm (or improvement) to a view from a more sensitive receptor and would be a readily discernible element in the view.			
			The proposals would have a limited effect on a view from a medium sensitive receptor but would still be a visable element within the view or a greater effect on a view from a receptor of lower sensitivity.		
				The proposals would result in a negligible change to the view but would still be discernible.	
					No change in the view.

Footnote:

1. Each level (other than neutral) of change identified can be either regarded as 'beneficial' or 'adverse'.

