

Land to the north of Droitwich

PINS APP/H1840/W/22/3305934

LPA Ref W/22/00201/OUT

Charles Potterton – Proof of Evidence



on behalf of

Wychavon District Council
November 2022

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 My name is Charles Potterton. I am a Chartered Member of The Landscape Institute and Director of Potterton Associates Ltd. I hold a BA Degree in Landscape Architecture (1982), a Diploma in Landscape Architecture (1983) and have been practicing as a Landscape Architect since 1984.
- 1.2 Potterton Associates Ltd was founded in 1992, is a Registered Member of the Landscape Institute and trades as a Limited Company. During this time, I have carried out a significant number of visual impact assessments and character appraisals on a wide variety of sites.
- 1.3 I am Chairman of the Conservation Advisory Panel, which advises Worcester City Council on matters affecting the 11 Conservation Areas across the City of Worcester. I am a member of the DESIGN : MIDLANDS design review Panel, based in Birmingham.
- 1.4 I am also employed by Swindon Borough Council as a Consultant Landscape Architect and deal with landscape matters arising through the development control process. I prepare consultation responses for all planning applications that are deemed likely to have an impact on the landscape, including those within the North Wessex Downs AONB.
- 1.5 I have worked on a similar basis with Bath & North East Somerset Council which includes the World Heritage Site of the City of Bath. I currently work with several other Local Authorities to include Mendip District Council, Malvern Hills District Council, Herefordshire County Council and South Somerset District Council. My work includes preparation of Consultation Responses and giving evidence at Hearings and Public Inquiries.
- 1.6 I was commissioned by Wychavon District Council in October 2022 to review the evidence and subsequently agreed to act on behalf of Wychavon District Council on landscape matters.

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1.7 During the preparation of this document, I have used the following research documents –

- All reports, plans and drawings (including appendices) submitted with the application & previous appeal
- Consultation responses to the application(s)
- National, local and strategic planning policies
- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA 3)
- TGN 02/21 Valued Landscape (Landscape Institute 2021)
- LCA Technical Handbook August 2013
- Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Guidance (August 2012)
- South Worcestershire Development Plan
- National Character Area profile 106: Severn and Avon Vales (Natural England 2014)
- Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Guidance October 2011
- Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2: Managing Decision Making in the Historic Environment (Historic England, 2015)
- Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England, 2nd Edition 2017)
- European Landscape Convention 2000 (Council of Europe)

1.8 The evidence that I have prepared and provide in this document is true and has been prepared and is given in accordance with the guidance of my professional institution and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.

2.0 Background

2.1 The original application was lodged on 22nd January 2021 (Ref 2021/0157/OTS) for up to 140 dwellings. This was subsequently refused (decision notice dated 26th May 2021).

2.2 The previous application 17/01631/OUT was submitted in August 2017 and was Refused on 18/6/2018. The previous Public Inquiry opened on 8/10/2019 and was Dismissed by the Inspector with the Appeal Decision issued on 28/1/2020.

2.3 Appeal Decision (APP/H1840/W/18/3218814)

2.4 The Inspector made the following comments / statements in her decision. My edit and emphasis -

(9) the appeal site is therefore located in **open countryside**.

(14) The Hampton Lovett Industrial Estate... is **well screened by dense tree planting**... does not intrude significantly upon the appearance of the appeal site... does not prevent the appeal site from being perceived as countryside.

(15) Doverdale Park - This visual block form and intensity of use creates its own character within the countryside - Whilst it is a detractor from the adjoining pasture, it is the type of use that can be found in rural locations and sometimes the most scenic of places. - It clearly forms part of the current character of Hampton Lovett but a very specific and well-defined element of it. However, it is not characteristic of the landscape character type.

(20) **The character of the appeal site is of agricultural land, with woodland planting and hedgerows.** While the railway separates this land from the wider expanse of farmland, it is not an uncharacteristic feature of open countryside, indeed main railway lines cross such landscapes. The built form of settlement is of dispersed housing and wayside housing. Whilst the mobile home park creates a different built form, and is part of the immediate area, the mobile homes are physically low structures. The housing proposed might screen those mobile homes, which detract from the agricultural pastureland, from some directions. **However, an estate of modern suburban dwellings would appear even more uncharacteristic, being at odds with those mobile homes, the**

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agricultural land, the dispersed dwellings and the linear housing along The Forest and other wayside dwellings.

(21) ...there were relatively limited views of the site when approached from the road and footpath network...there would be views of the proposed housing, albeit with screening or set within foreground and background planting, which would still be likely even after enhanced planting had become established. In particular, there would be views from the east of the site, the length of The Forest, and from the A422. There would also be views from passing trains, albeit these are likely to be of relatively short duration.

The impacts on walkers along The Forest / Monarchs Way would be more significant than for many other users of this landscape. This is because the dwellings along The Forest to the Church and the open space towards Doverdale Park, and beyond it, provide a low-key transition between the countryside and urban fringe development of the industrial estates at this side of Droitwich.

The proposed development, even with some areas of public open space, would result in a suburban character between the railway line and A422. This would detract from the enjoyment of the route for those taking longer walks along the Monarchs Way / Public Right of Way Network and for those using the more immediate area between the main road and the Church as an opportunity to get away from the urban area for short recreational breaks.

(22) ...**development in this location would have a harmful visual impact upon the open countryside** and upon the character of the settlement of Hampton Lovett. **I do not consider this to be appropriate to, or to integrate with, the character of the landscape setting** and so I conclude that in this respect **the proposal fails to accord with Policy SWDP 25.**

(23) Even if the primary characteristics set out on the Landscapes of Worcestershire Landscape Information Sheet for Principal Timbered Farmlands...are conserved and enhanced in any landscaping scheme, I do not consider that this results in compliance with Policy SWDP 25 taken in totality. Rather, **I consider that the proposed development, as a whole, would be harmful to the open countryside, landscape character, and upon the character of the settlement of Hampton Lovett.** In this respect, as well as being located outside the settlement boundary for Droitwich, contrary to Policy SWDP 2, there would be a failure to accord with the development plan...

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(26) **The Church (Church of St Mary, Grade I listed) is the listed building, and whilst its great age is particularly important, its later elements are also of significance and value, as is its wider setting.**

(29) ...the appeal site... is **an area of open pastureland** to the south of the Church. Whilst it does not have a fixed functional, ownership or financial link to the building, **the open pastureland provides a clear rural setting and strong sense of separation from the town of Droitwich which has been the case for hundreds of years. It provides for a sense of calmness even if it is not particularly tranquil. This setting therefore reinforces understanding of the historic role of the Church in providing for a rural community over a sustained period and this contributes to the significance of the asset. Additionally, it provides for aesthetic interest that is derived from glimpsed views along The Forest of the Church seen with a woodland backdrop and with a pastureland context.**

(30) ...the wider setting including the appeal site contributes to the significance of this asset

(33) The key issue is therefore the effect of developing on the pastureland itself. Whilst it is intended to provide open space on the area closest to the Church, **the loss of that pastureland would have an adverse effect upon the setting of the Church and thus would harm its significance**, albeit this is a limited part of its significance as a whole. In the terms of the Framework, this amounts to less than substantial harm however, **it is still of considerable importance and weight**. As such, it is harm which should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposed development.

- 2.5 The current application ref 22/00201/OUT was submitted in January 2022 and an Appeal was received against non-determination of that application.
- 2.6 This proof of evidence will review the original landscape arguments and will show that these are still pertinent. I will also show that the current iteration, whilst now including a reduced number of dwellings, has not resolved the primary issues as raised by the previous Inspector.
- 2.7 It is my opinion that, irrespective of the changes to the layout, the degree of adverse harm remains and that these need to be weighed in the overall balance.

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2.8 The scheme causes harm to include -

- significant visual harm to highly sensitive receptors located around the primary boundaries of the site
- harm to the dispersed settlement pattern of the area
- significant harm to local landscape character
- significant harm to the landscape setting of valuable heritage assets
- harm to a valued landscape.

2.9 It is therefore contrary to a variety of National and Local planning policies.

3.0 Baseline

3.1 The appeal site lies outside the defined settlement boundary of Droitwich and therefore in open countryside.

3.2 The site is in two distinct parts. The upper area (which is the subject of the built element of this application) and the lower 'valley' area. The latter is intended to include an attenuation pond, link foot and cycle paths and new planting. The latter, valley area is designated as a 'Significant Gap' in the adopted SWDP.

3.3 The eastern boundary of the application site is formed by a post and wire fence and numerous mature Oak trees together with other sporadic vegetation. Behind this vegetation is a ditch and an embankment on the top of which sits the two-line Droitwich to Birmingham railway.

3.4 The northern boundary is now a notional line midway through the upper parcel of land.

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3.5 This land had been included in the previous unsuccessful appeal but was later omitted in an attempt to address the comments made by the previous Inspector.

3.6 The original northern boundary to the site also contains a line of 'estate' railings. These run the whole length of this boundary and include a matching 'kissing gate' opposite to the Church / Lychgate. It is important to note that these 'estate' railings are an important part of the character of the site. See my Photo 06 & Fig 05.

3.7 Due to its high cost, this type of railing is not normally used around 'normal' fields but is traditionally used to mark boundaries of parkland, country parks, deer parks and country houses and adds to the character of the site. As noted by Mr Hickie at 3.18 of his evidence, this type of fencing was used to allow maximum visibility of the rural field beyond and to minimise the screening of the view by the fencing elements.

3.8 **Public Rights of Way (PROW)**

3.9 There are a number of public rights of way located nearby that do have an interaction with the site –

- 'Monarchs Way' 537(b)
- 538(b)
- 522(c)
- 539(b)
- 521(c)

3.10 These are shown on the definitive map extract in my appendices Fig 07.

3.11 **Built structures**

3.12 There are no built structures on the site.

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3.13 Listed buildings

3.14 There are no listed buildings or structures actually on the site but there are three in the immediate vicinity -

- Grade I listed Church of St Mary
- Grade 2 listed Lych gate
- Grade 2 listed Pakington Memorial gravestone

3.15 Details of these important heritage assets is covered in detail by Mr Hickie and as noted in recent research and Historic England letter of 8th November 2022.

3.16 Tree Preservation Orders (TPO)

3.17 At the time of writing, there are no TPO's on or beside the site.

3.18 Topography

3.19 The upper part of the site is broadly flat although it does slope downwards from east to west. There are more distinct changes in level near to the railway boundary. The railway is on a man-made embankment.

3.20 The southern section of the wider site is a steeply sloping valley.

3.21 Best and most Versatile Land

3.22 The overall site divides into the following Agricultural Land Grades –

- Grade 2 – 1.5 hectares
- Grade 3a – 5.2 hectares
- Grade 3b – 5.5 hectares.

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4.0 The submitted LVA & DAS

- 4.1 Having read the submitted Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) edp5357_r003b together with its associated diagrams, I would make the following observations -
- 4.2 **5** Regards Doverdale Park as 'existing residential development' and considers that the proposed development would 'read as an extension' to that. Whilst the mobile homes of Doverdale Park Home are indeed residences (i.e. people live in them all year around and are not holiday / short term), their character is very different to what is proposed. The previous Inspector was very clear in the differences (see para 20 above). The previous inspector was also very clear that the proposed development would be discordant with the local patterns of development. The current iteration is only different in terms of quantity and not type of development, so the Inspectors conclusions are still pertinent.
- 4.3 It is important to note that the site at Doverdale is in fact a historical remnant of a WW2 Workers Camp, which were not always located in urban areas.
- 4.4 **Plan EDP4:** EDP Landscape Character Assessment – identifies that '*Residential development at The Forest and at Doverdale Park has urbanising influence on site.*' This suggests that these separate settlement areas are themselves urban in character. I disagree and consider that 'The Forest' is hamlet typical of many rural hamlets and 'Doverdale Park' is a wholly discrete entity and is certainly not urban in character.
- 4.5 Photographs from Photoviewpoint EDP2, EDP3 and EDP4 show views currently enjoyed from The Forest and from St Mary's Church. The proposed housing would clearly be visible in these views.
- 4.6 **1.13** Assessment methodology - The assessment of likely effects is reached using a structured methodology for defining sensitivity,

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magnitude and significance which is contained as Appendix EDP 2. However, the actual reporting of harms is very light on detail.

- 4.7 **2.2** *'Beyond the vegetated boundary to the south and west, Berry Hill industrial estate and Hampton Lovett industrial estate influence the site and its immediate surroundings.'* Due to the depth of existing vegetation south of the site, Berry Hill is barely visible from the site. Hampton Lovett Industrial Estate is very well contained by boundary planting along the Kidderminster Road frontage. The previous Inspector acknowledged this. It is my opinion that neither Berry Hill (to the south) nor Hampton Lovett Industrial Estates (to the west) have any meaningful influence on this site or its immediate surroundings.
- 4.8 **3.3** The EDP data trawl fails to identify that PRoW 537 (B) which passes along The Forest to the north is part of the 625 mile Monarch's Way Long Distance Footpath (LDP), based on the route taken by King Charles II during his escape after being defeated by Cromwell in the final battle of the Civil Wars at Worcester in 1651. This right of way is, therefore, used not only by local people but also visitors to the area who are following the LDP, and is a promoted leisure route. Neither is Monarch's Way mentioned in relation to Photo viewpoints 2 and 3 in Table EDP 5.1 (page 21) - the car park outside the front of the Village Hall (VP2) and the Lych Gate (VP3) both being on The Forest and fronting the PRoW which forms part of Monarch's Way. The promoted route is only mentioned in relation to VP4 on Table EDP 5.1 – which is within the churchyard.
- 4.9 **4.5** Suggests *'it is recognised'* that published Landscape Guidelines for Landscape Types (LT) within the County Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) *'are principally aimed at countryside management proposals and practices.'* The County Council website on its Landscape Character Assessment page advises, however, that *'LCA is most commonly used as the basis for giving advice and guidance to local authority planning staff, both for strategic and development control purposes.'*

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- 4.10 SWDP 25 requires that development proposals must take into account the WCC LCA and its guidelines and, particularly in regard to settlement pattern, it is clear that these guidelines have not been followed.
- 4.11 **4.7** Seeks to quote from the County Council assessment of the Landscape Description Unit LDU MW118.2: Westwood Principal Timbered Farmlands (a more localised assessment within the LT). The last bullet point says “*Localised high urban impact along urban fringe, includes industrial estate and golf course*”. What the County Council actually say for the LDU is ‘localised high urban impact along urban fringe also includes separate industrial estate and golf course.’ I consider the word ‘separate’ is important as it indicates that the industrial estate is a distinct entity within the LDU.
- 4.12 **4.12** Suggests ‘*The urban edge of Droitwich has clearly changed to accommodate development, which has had considerable effect on the rural character of the site.*’ I disagree as the urban edge of Droitwich is clearly some distance to the south and does not influence the character of the site.
- 4.13 **4.16 – 4.19** incorrectly, in my opinion, considers the site to be of ‘low’ sensitivity. I also consider that the ‘detracting features’ of the industrial estates to the south and west are overstated. They are both well screened by mature vegetation.
- 4.14 The WCC LCA Resilience Page 627, Table 4.2 – illustrates that Principal Timbered Farmlands are the 3rd least resilient LT out of 22 LTs within the County. This suggests the site is not of low sensitivity but is actually highly susceptible to change (where susceptibility as outlined at 4.16 of the LVA is defined as ‘the ability of the receptor (whether the overall character, individual fabric elements or perceptual aspects) to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation.’

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- 4.15 **5.10** Table EDP 5.1. Regards road users as being of low sensitivity visual receptors. GLVIA3 advises (section 6.33) 'travellers on road, rail and other transport routes tend to fall into an intermediate category of moderate susceptibility to change.' The Sensitivity of Receptor should, I suggest, therefore be 'medium' rather than low. It is also correct that professional judgement be used at each assessment / receptor location. For example, people driving slowly along The Forest, either accessing their own houses or visiting the Grade 1 Church would, I consider be in a high bracket of sensitivity, especially where there is a particular interest in the view.
- 4.16 **5.12** Does not acknowledge that Monarch's Way also runs along The Forest and not just through the churchyard. From parts of The Forest there are clear views into the site and in other places filtered views through vegetation. I would disagree with the notion that there is 'limited visibility', and this would be especially relevant in winter months with no leaf cover.
- 4.17 **5.15** suggests that the industrial estate forms '*an urban context to the site.*' The industrial estate is well contained visually and does not detract from the rural character of the site. The previous Inspector acknowledged this point at 14 in the Appeal Decision.
- 4.18 **5.19** These are not high-speed trains; they are local trains that will be starting off from/slowing to stop at Droitwich station. Having taken the train journey in both directions I confirm that it takes an average of 14 seconds for a train to pass the site. I disagree that, from the railway, the site is viewed within a context of surrounding development and that it is viewed as part of settlement edge. Doverdale Park Mobile Home Park is a discrete entity, typical of rural locations and the Industrial Estate is largely screened by vegetation and the edge of Droitwich is some distance away.

- 4.19 **5.21-22** Trees are without their leaves for half the year. The vegetation in that area is all deciduous so those views identified from dwellings will be open for half the year.
- 4.20 **5.23** I disagree that Doverdale Park is an 'urbanising' influence. Mobile home parks are typical of many rural locations. Previous Inspector acknowledged this point at 15 in the Appeal Decision.
- 4.21 **6.4 to 6.9** This suggests that '*concerns relating to landscape and visual matters have been addressed and incorporated into the new proposed layout for the site.*' I disagree with this statement. Whilst I do acknowledge that some dwellings have been omitted from the scheme and that the relationship with the first 75m of The Forest (NW of the scheme) has changed, the proposed suburban development will still be significantly visible in views from The Forest (and Monarch's Way) across any retained field. My Fig 03 & 08 (appendix 2) reveal that the actual differences between the two schemes is minimal.
- 4.22 It is important to note that any strategic planning will have to be placed within the red line application boundary and not within the blue line land now omitted from the scheme.
- 4.23 Whilst acknowledging that there may be some landscape enhancement in terms of new hedge and tree planting, this would not outweigh the harm that the proposed development would have on the rural character of the area and the dispersed settlement pattern in particular.
- 4.24 Whilst the overall EDP document is some 95 pages long, the actual assessment of effects is rather brief and restricted to pages 31-35. In my opinion, it has also underestimated or underreported the actual harms.
- 4.25 For example, the loss of roadside (A442 / Kidderminster Road) hedge is not mentioned at all in the assessment of effects. This is surprising as the loss of this hedge will cause a significant change in character to users of

the road and to the site itself. It also, incorrectly in my opinion, at 7.15, says that views from the southern extent of Kidderminster Rd would 'experience no change'.

- 4.26 At **7.1** the LVA notes that it uses thresholds of magnitude, sensitivity and significance but does not actually properly report on the combination of sensitivity and magnitude of change. The LVA wholly misunderstands the character of the site and therefore does not properly assess the changes.
- 4.27 At **7.6** the overall conclusion on landscape character is, I consider, wholly incorrect – 'On balance, therefore, the overall effect on the character of the site is considered to be moderate/minor adverse. While new built form would be introduced, the character of the site would 'on the whole' remain intact'. This is patently incorrect as the change from an undeveloped, open field to a 102 unit residential 'suburban estate' is clearly major and as I cannot see that as a positive, it must be **major adverse**.
- 4.28 The scheme does not properly understand the relatively small scale of the site and, apparently believes that it can accommodate a scheme of up to 5 houses deep within a width of some 50m without causing any harm to the character of the remaining 75m.
- 4.29 The main part of the site is some 200m wide. The proposed scheme will result in a distance of approximately 100m between the Forest and the development. Given the size of the new buildings, I cannot accept that the character of the remaining land to the north, will remain. Likewise, I cannot agree that the change from an open field to a 100m deep area of grass with new housing scheme no more than 100m away will 'retain the setting' of the Church. Overall, the LVA has completely underestimated the degree of change and resulting harm to landscape character.

- 4.30 In respect of harm to visual amenity, it is accepted that the visual envelope is relatively narrow and generally contained to those who pass the site on the Kidderminster Rd, those who live on The Forest, those who live in Doverdale and those passing the site on a national route (Monarch's Way). This is not an inconsiderable suite of receptors. The latter group are in the highest bracket of sensitivity.
- 4.31 **7.5** suggests that, because the boundary treatment of the site would remain (and be enhanced), because the land to the north and south remain as 'pastoral' (despite the fact that land to the north is no longer within the application) that the construction of 102 houses within this small-scale landscape will only have a moderate to / minor adverse effect. This must be incorrect. My own assessment of the effect is high sensitivity x major magnitude of change = major adverse significance.
- 4.32 **7.5-7.7** I fail to see how the proposed development of 102 dwellings with a typically suburban layout could 'read as an extension to Doverdale Park' – which is a discrete entity of single storey mobile homes. I disagree that 'the overall effect on the character of the site is considered to be moderate/minor adverse. While new built form would be introduced, the character of the site would 'on the whole' remain intact. Rather, I suggest the effect would be major adverse – particularly in consideration of the impact on settlement pattern as an indicator of landscape character.
- 4.33 Whilst a large part of 'LCP2c is heavily influenced by industrial built form and existing residential development,' the site itself is not.
- 4.34 **7.9 - 7.12** I do agree that the visual envelope is quite contained due to topography and vegetation in the wider landscape. However, I disagree that 'proposals would appear to be consistent with the local context of built form.' Whilst the proposed dwellings might be 2 storey (and this is an outline application so that may change and three storey buildings are mentioned in the DAS), the context of existing built form is that it is laid out as wayside dwellings in a dispersed manner. The

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proposed development would be at odds with this. Again, I completely disagree that the development would 'read as an extension to Doverdale Park' in views from the north along The Forest (Monarch's Way).

- 4.35 **7.16.** As noted above, these are not high-speed trains and there are clear and open views from the passing trains. Proposed houses would be located as close as 20m to the railway line, so the 'minor / negligible' conclusion is also clearly incorrect. I have taken the train journey in both directions which takes 14 seconds. The change will be patently obvious and harmful.
- 4.36 **8.3** it is suggested that '*... the surrounding context – particularly Doverdale Park – constitutes residential built form so that the proposals would not be in discordance with the existing character of the site.*' Doverdale Park home has a completely different character to what is proposed on the site. It is a discrete entity of mobile homes, as is often found in rural locations (as acknowledged by the previous Inspector). A suburban estate of 2-storey dwellings (with possibly some two and a half and three storey units 'to provide variation to roofline and to 'provide local landmarks and focal points' as noted at p10 DAS) has a completely different character.
- 4.37 **8.4** concludes 'Overall, the development would read as an extension to the existing residential development at Doverdale Park. While it would constitute a general change to the land use of the site, it would not be in discordance with the local context and local patterns of development. The location of built form, allowing for the retention of open fields to the north and south, appears to respect the local character. Additional planting on the boundaries of the development and within the scheme would soften its visual effects and would provide varied landscape elements within the site. The proposed development would not be inconsistent with the local landscape character. While it would be prominent from certain close-range viewpoint locations, it is

generally considered to be visually contained, having limited effect on the open countryside to the east.'

- 4.38 I do not agree that the development would read as an 'extension' to Doverdale Park because they are very clearly very different in scale, type, character and colour. The proposed scheme would be discordant with the local context and would not respect the existing dispersed arrangement of wayside dwellings in the local area.
- 4.39 The concept of not building on a portion of the field to the north in an attempt to retain its character is a flawed strategy which will not work.
- 4.40 Houses will still be clearly visible, and the character of the remaining space will be wholly altered.
- 4.41 It is acknowledged that more varied landscape elements might be provided as part of the scheme – but any landscape 'enhancement' would not outweigh the harm to the local landscape character or the impact on public views particularly from Monarch's Way.
- 4.42 The EDP Plan EDP6 includes two primary viewpoints – a double headed arrow both located within Doverdale Park and noted as 'retained views'. Although there will still be 'a view' from each, the content of the view in both cases will change so totally as to be unrecognisable. Where at present there is an open view of a field, there will be a view containing a new 102-unit housing scheme. This is illustrated in my Fig 05.
- 4.43 That drawing also contains the incorrect note that the 'Setting of listed church to be retained as existing'. The existing field will be cut in half with the outer part to contain 102 houses. That cannot be construed as being 'retained as existing'.

4.44 Design and Access Statement

- 4.45 The submitted Design and Access Statement itself acknowledges that the frontage to The Forest and the northern and eastern boundaries of Doverdale are '**Vulnerable Receptors**'. This does not tally with the LVA where it notes (PVP No 11 p22) that views from the northern edge of Doverdale Park are 'road users' and of 'low sensitivity'.
- 4.46 The LVA has neglected to consider or to mention that receptors to the north side of Doverdale are (following GLVIA3 guidance at 6.33) high sensitivity as they are residents at home with views from ground floor and likely to experience prolonged views of the development.
- 4.47 The 'Natural Play Area' is located within the 'Significant Gap' and as far away from the 'existing community' as is possible.

5.0 Valued Landscape

- 5.1 It is accepted that this landscape is not designated. However, Wychavon District Council has not designated any part of the landscape within the district in terms of landscape quality, so the fact that this landscape is not designated is not a surprise or anything unusual.
- 5.2 It does not mean that it is of any lesser value than anywhere else in the district, other than the relatively small areas around Broadway and Bredon Hill to the south of the district which are within the Cotswolds National Landscape (AONB).
- 5.3 Para 5.26 of GLVIA3 sets out, in respect of undesignated landscapes, *'the fact that an area of landscape is not designated either nationally or locally does not mean that it does not have any value'*.
- 5.4 In the Landscape Proof of Evidence for the previous Inquiry, Mrs Eileen Marshall (LPA Landscape Officer) did mention landscape value, but this

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this was in relation to a previous version of the NPPF (July 2018) and also before TGN 02/21 had been published. Her POE, at 2.1 stated -

2.1 Paragraph 9 of NPPF18 requires that planning decisions 'should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.' Paragraph 127 (c) requires that planning decisions should ensure that developments 'are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities).' I will demonstrate in my evidence how the proposed development would not reflect, and would not be sympathetic to, the local character and landscape setting. Paragraph 170 requires that planning decisions should 'contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: (a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan); (b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside' However, with regard to 170 (a) it should be borne in mind that Paragraph 2 of NPPF18 also requires that planning decisions must 'reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements.'

*The European Landscape Convention 2000 (ratified by the UK in 2006) acknowledges that 'the landscape is an important part of the quality of life for people everywhere: in urban areas and in the countryside, in degraded areas as well as in areas of high quality, in areas recognised as being of outstanding beauty as well as everyday areas' (**Appendix 1**).*

This recognises that all landscapes have some degree of value – not just those that have a statutory status or that are identified specifically in development

plans. This particular landscape of the appeal site has value for the setting it provides for both the public right of way to its northern boundary (Monarch's Way) and the Listed Building (as will be considered by my Conservation colleague), as well as the rural wooded agricultural landscape setting it provides to the hamlet of Hampton Lovett – as will be outlined in this Proof.

- 5.5 It is common ground that the site is not designated, but the LVA does not consider its role as landscape setting of a Grade 1 listed heritage asset, nor does it mention anywhere the estate railings and kissing gate which underline its historic links.
- 5.6 There is no question that the appeal site forms part of the wider landscape setting for the Grade 1 listed Church as this was acknowledged by the previous Inspector and has been heavily underpinned by recent response from Historic England.
- 5.7 The concept of a “valued landscape” is an unusual part of the NPPF as it is not defined in its glossary and has generally been left to case law to try to define how it is required to be approached.
- 5.8 Box 5.1 of GLVIA3 sets out a range of factors that can help in the identification of valued landscapes. Whilst it is not definitive, it has been utilised by Inspectors in Appeal Decisions and has been referred to by the Courts (in cases such as ‘Stroud’ and ‘Forest of Dean’). It is important not to focus solely on measuring what individual elements or ‘component parts’ are within the actual site, but to consider the site as part of the wider landscape as this will give a better and more balanced view of its true value.
- 5.9 Further, the introduction to Box 5.1 (GLVIA 5.28) tells us that the factors included (in Box 5.1) need to be interpreted to reflect the particular legislative and context prevailing in a particular place. In this case, the previous Inspectors Appeal Decision and advice from Historic England,

are an important part of the context as they give clear reasons why this site should not be developed.

- 5.10 I have assessed the site and its immediate surrounds using a range from extraordinary, very good, good, ordinary, or poor in terms of performance against these criteria.

Table 1 GLVIA Box 5.1

Factor	Notes
Landscape quality (condition)	Ordinary. The site is in moderate physical condition.
Scenic quality	Good. It is accepted that the homes at Doverdale do appear as a detracting element on the southern boundary. However, the scenic quality of the overall site itself and, in particular, the view it provides towards / of The Forest, the Lychgate and the Church on the north is particularly attractive.
Rarity	Extraordinary. This is not a rare landscape character type per se, but land that provides setting for a Grade 1 listed heritage assets is rare as Grade 1 listed forms only the top 2.5% of all listed buildings nationally and are considered to be of exceptional architectural and historic interest.
Representativeness	Good. The site and its setting are representative of the identified landscape character with reference to the county LCA particularly in regard to settlement pattern (dispersed) and land use (mixed farming)
Conservation Interests	Extraordinary. It has been accepted by the previous Inspector and as set out by Mr Hickie, that this site is an important part of the setting of the listed Lychgate and of the Grade 1 listed Church. The presence of estate railings and kissing gate along the northern boundary set it out as different from an 'ordinary' landscape.

	Only 2.5% of listed buildings are Grade 1 so that makes them rare. Historic England describe them as being 'of exceptional interest'.
Recreation Value	Ordinary. The site is not open to members of the public.
Perceptual aspects	Good. The site is not 'wild' but is tranquil. It is also perceived as part of the Church and its graveyard which are also tranquil and sombre elements. It is accepted that there are occasional trains passing, but these are slow and relatively quiet. The guidebook to the Church entitled 'If only these walls could talk' notes the churchyard as ' <i>a tranquil setting and final resting place for so many that have gone before; those for whom, throughout the centuries Hampton Lovett Church was a place of peace, comfort and spiritual inspiration</i> '.
Associations	The guidebook to the Church entitled 'If only these walls could talk' also notes Associated with the Packingtons – they lived at Westwood House, and this would have been their parish church

5.11 It is my opinion that, based mainly on 'Conservation Interests' but bolstered by others, the factors noted above combine to make this a 'valued landscape'.

5.12 In February 2021, the Landscape Institute published a Technical Guidance Note TGN 02/21 'Assessing landscape value outside national designations' and this guidance has been used to further consider the landscape value of the Site.

Table 2 TGN 02 / 21

Factor	Notes
Natural Heritage	Ordinary. It is accepted that the site does not contain elements of ecological value.
Cultural Heritage	Extraordinary. It has been accepted by the previous Inspector and as set out by Mr Hickie, that this site is an important part of

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	<p>the setting of the listed Lychgate and of the Grade 1 listed Church. The presence of estate railings and kissing gate along the northern boundary set it out as different from an 'ordinary' landscape.</p> <p>Only 2.5% of listed buildings are grade 1 so that makes them rare. Historic England describe them as being 'of exceptional interest'.</p>
Landscape Condition	Ordinary. The landscape is in moderate physical condition
Associations	Very good. The application site lies adjacent to and within the setting of the Church of St Mary. It is a 12th century church with fabric from the 14th century through to the 19th century and has historical associations with the Pakington family. This is set out in Mr Hickie's evidence and in the 8 th November HE letter & research.
Distinctiveness	Good. This is a very important part of the character and identity of Hampton Lovett.
Recreational	Ordinary. There is no direct public access to the majority of the site but Monarchs Way passes the northern boundary and 538(b) passes through the NE corner.
Perceptual (Scenic)	Good / ordinary. It is accepted that Doverdale Park homes are a detracting feature and this was acknowledged by the previous Inspector. However at 15, she notes that these are a type of use that can be found in rural locations and sometimes in the most scenic of places.
Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)	<p>Good. The site is not 'wild' but is tranquil. It is also perceived as part of the Church and its graveyard which are also tranquil and sombre elements. It is accepted that there are occasional trains passing, but these are slow and relatively quiet.</p> <p>The guidebook to the Church entitled 'If only these walls could talk' notes the churchyard as <i>'a tranquil setting and final resting place for so many that have gone before; those for whom, throughout the centuries Hampton Lovett Church was a place of peace, comfort and spiritual inspiration'</i>.</p>
Functional	Ordinary.

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- 5.13 TGN 02/21 was first issued in June 2022, after the previous Public Inquiry had finished. Advice within TGN 02/21 is that there are other criteria that can be used to give an understanding of the value of a landscape. Cultural Heritage – for example *'Landscape which contributes to the significance of heritage assets, for example forming the setting of heritage assets (especially if identified in specialist studies)'* is particularly relevant in this case.
- 5.14 Given that only some 2.5% of all listed buildings (Heritage England statistic) are in the Grade 1 category, this means they are considered to be of exceptional architectural and historic interest.
- 5.15 The recent letter and additional evidence from Heritage England makes it abundantly clear that there is a definite and clear link between this site and the Grade 1 asset. I consider that, based largely on its Cultural Heritage and Associations criteria, it is a 'valued landscape'.
- 5.16 The fact that this is a 'valued landscape' should then be included in the assessment of underlying sensitivity of the landscape. It is important to note that EDP LVA was carried out since the previous appeal and since TGN02/21 was published but does not include any discussion around the topic of Valued Landscape. It has therefore, in my opinion, underestimated the sensitivity of this site.

6.0 Impact on Landscape Character

- 6.1 The previous Inspector acknowledged that this site is in open countryside and is open pasture. The character of the appeal site is of agricultural land, with surrounding woodland and hedgerows.
- 6.2 The previous Inspector sets out, in very clear terms, at 20 (p4) of her Appeal Decision that *'An Estate of modern suburban dwellings would appear even more uncharacteristic, being at odds with those mobile homes, the agricultural land, the dispersed dwellings and the linear*

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housing along The Forest and other wayside dwellings. The current scheme might be marginally different in number and layout but is still equally as uncharacteristic and harmful'.

- 6.3 The key question now is whether the current scheme is substantially different to the point where it actually addresses the concerns of the previous Inspector.
- 6.4 Fig 03 of my Appendices demonstrates the relative differences between the original and current schemes in regard to the marginally increased distances between the proposed houses and The Forest. The difference of 30 metres will, in reality, make no appreciable difference to the change and impact on character. See my Fig 08.
- 6.5 Based on an extrapolation of the information in the EDP LVA, I have populated the following table -

Table 3.0 – Comparative Assessment of Landscape Effects

TYPE	TIME	EDP Sensitivity	EDP Landscape Effect	CP Sensitivity	CP Magnitude	CP Significance
Character of the site	Year 1 / Operation	Low	Moderate / minor adverse	High	Major	Substantial adverse
	Year 15	Low	Not reported	High	Major	Moderate adverse
Westwood Principal Timbered Farmlands (2c)	Year 1 / Operation	Low	Minor adverse	Medium	Major	Substantial adverse
	Year 15	Low	Not reported	Medium	Moderate	Moderate adverse
Westwood Principal Timbered Farmlands (2f)	Year 1 / Operation	Medium	Negligible	Medium	Major	Substantial adverse
	Year 15	Medium	Not reported	Medium		Moderate adverse

- 6.6 It is accepted that there would be limited harm to the wider landscape but that does not lessen the harm to the site itself.
- 6.7 I consider that the site is of high sensitivity given that it is part of the wider setting of the Grade 1 Heritage Asset. It is also part of the setting of two

Grade 2 Heritage Assets. It is adjacent to and clearly visible from a National Route (Monarch's Way).

- 6.8 It is an important part of the setting for the residential properties along The Forest and an important part of the setting of Doverdale Park. It is also a valued landscape. The proposals will cause a change that is major in terms of magnitude.
- 6.9 The combination of high sensitivity and major magnitude of change results in an effect that is substantial adverse to the site and its immediate surroundings.
- 6.10 Para 2.2 (p14) of GLVIA3 states that -

'Landscape is about the relationship between people and place. It provides the setting for our day-to-day lives. The term does not mean just special or designated landscapes and it does not only apply to the countryside.

Landscape can mean a small patch of urban wasteland as much as a mountain range, and an urban park as much as an expanse of lowland plain. It results from the way that different components of our environment – both natural (the influences of geology, soils, climate, flora and fauna) and cultural (the historical and current impact of land use, settlement, enclosure and other human interventions) – interact together and are perceived by us.

People's perceptions turn land into the concept of landscape' (Swanwick and Land Use Consultants, 2002: 2)

- 6.11 In my opinion, the important part of this extract is how the component parts of a landscape interact together to form the character of the site
- 6.12 The site is a small scale, rural landscape with important links to the Heritage Assets located beside it. The metal estate railings are not a normal part of an agricultural landscape but are more usually located along avenues or within parkland landscapes. In addition to the estate railings, to the immediate front of the Church & Lychgate there is a kissing

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gate. This gave access to the path that once crossed the site. This would have been an important part of the route leading to the church.

- 6.13 The primary change would be from a small grass field to a 102-unit residential development with all its associated roads, garages, gardens, paths, ponds and lighting. The underlying small scale, rural character will change completely. Irrespective of the layout or design of buildings, this harm will exist. I accept that the scheme is illustrative, but it must be fair to assume this is a fair representation of how the appellant intends to develop the site.
- 6.14 The LVA notes extensive pedestrian routes across the site. As there is no public access and the site is extensively grazed by sheep, I believe the author was mistaking sheep tracks for footpaths.
- 6.15 Whilst there may be other points of detail in respect of the internal configuration of the scheme, the primary differences are twofold – (A) the loss of 38 dwellings from the NW corner of the site and (B) the remainder of the houses are set some 20m further away from the Church (see my Fig 03).
- 6.16 In respect of (A), this does result in more open space to the north side of the scheme and less intrusion to houses along The Forest (i.e. those between Kidderminster Road and the parish hall). Whilst this would be some benefit to the 6 houses, the fact that the remainder of the 102-unit scheme would remain visible would mean the harms might be reduced slightly but not to any meaningful amount.
- 6.17 The increase in size of the open land in front of the Church by 20m is, in my opinion, meaningless. This will not reduce the harms to the setting of the Church as identified by the previous Inspector. See my Fig 03 & 08 for the actual differences with these changes in distance.
- 6.18 It is a well-established principle that setting of a heritage asset is the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not

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fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. It may also be more extensive than its curtilage.

6.19 In this case, the setting of the Church is the whole field and not just a small part of it. Similarly, the contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights or an ability to access or experience that setting. Mr Hickie has set out in detail how the site functions in relation to the heritage assets.

6.20 It is my opinion that the revised scheme does not address the harms identified by the previous Inspector. Indeed, irrespective of the changes to the scheme, I consider, in reality, the harms are the same.

6.21 The EDP 6 plan includes a 'retained view' to the north of Doverdale Park. My Fig 02 illustrates a normal height person (in this case Wychavon District Council Planning Officer Mr Singh and important to note he was actually standing on the site when the photo was taken and was not added afterwards) standing on the southern edge of the proposed scheme. It also shows the relative height of the proposed units and demonstrates that the only view will be that of new houses. Given the alignment of the units, there will no longer be a view of the Church or the Lychgate.

6.22 In respect of the site itself, I conclude an effect that is **Substantial adverse** in that it is at considerable variance with the character of the landscape as it degrades or diminishes the integrity of a wide range of characteristic elements and features of the landscape and substantially damage the sense of place.

6.23 Settlement pattern

6.24 The settlement pattern for this character area is identified as being '*dispersed, with hamlets and frequent wayside dwellings and cottages*' and my Fig 06 shows a plan originally prepared by Eileen Marshall for the previous appeal and clearly demonstrates this dispersed pattern.

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- 6.25 It is clear that the proposed scheme would be wholly at odds with this pattern and would not respect the identified landscape character of a dispersed settlement pattern, as outlined in NCA 106 and the Worcestershire LCA.
- 6.26 The previous Inspector also sets out, in very clear terms, at 20 (p4) of her Appeal Decision that *'An Estate of modern suburban dwellings would appear even more uncharacteristic, being at odds with those mobile homes, the agricultural land, the dispersed dwellings and the linear housing along The Forest and other wayside dwellings'*. The current scheme might be marginally different in number and layout but remains equally uncharacteristic.
- 6.27 The Inspector did not suggest that it was the scale or design of the layout that might be the issue but was very clear that it was the 'estate of modern suburban dwellings' that was the issue. That problem remains.

7.0 Visual Impact

- 7.1 The submitted LVA chose 11 viewpoints to illustrate the visual effects of the scheme. I do not disagree that the Zone of Theoretical Visibility or Zone of Visual Influence of the scheme might be relatively limited.
- 7.2 Importantly, those who do have a view of the site are generally of higher sensitivity and will be harmfully affected by the scheme.
- 7.3 GLVIA3 sets out, at 6.33, the visual receptors most susceptible to change are generally likely to include:
- residents at home (but see Paragraph 6.36)
 - people, whether residents or visitors, who are engaged in outdoor recreation, including use of public rights of way, whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape and on particular views

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- visitors to heritage assets, or to other attractions, where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience
- communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents in the area.

7.4 The primary receptors in this appeal almost all fall into the high sensitivity categories noted above -

- Users of Public Rights of Way – to include Monarchs Way, a National Route = High Sensitivity
- Visitors to and users of Church of St Mary (a grade 1 Heritage asset) = High Sensitivity
- Residential properties along The Forest = High Sensitivity
- Residential properties at Doverdale, many of whom have clear views from their downstairs / daytime windows = High Sensitivity

7.5 Other receptors include those road users passing the site on the A440 and it is acknowledged that these are in a lower bracket of sensitivity.

7.6 It is important to note that whilst the EDP LVA sets out the sensitivity of each receptor location / group in a clear tabular fashion at 5.10 (p21-22), it then fails to set out its findings in a legible fashion. There is confusion between magnitude, significance and level of effects which is not helpful to the reader. I consider that, irrespective of the points around presentation or methodology, the LVA has underestimated the degree of harm.

7.7 The LVA has simply assessed vp 11 as road users. This view should also properly include residents at home with a view from the ground floor and who are in a higher bracket of sensitivity. I consider that the LVA has underestimated the level of harm to this group of receptors.

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7.8 I have set out my findings below with extrapolated findings based on EDP Section 7 'Assessment of effects' 7.9-7.18 –

Table 4.0 – comparative assessment of Visual effects

REF	EDP LVA			CHARLES POTTERTON		
	Type	Sensitivity	'Level of effect'	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance
VP 1	Road users	Low	Minor / negligible	Low	Moderate	Negligible
VP 2	Road users Residents at The Forest	Low High	Moderate	High (to include low speed road users) & visitors to heritage asset	Major	Substantial adverse
VP 3	PROW users	High	Not reported but working from 7.11, major / moderate	High	Major	Substantial adverse
VP 4	PROW users	High	Moderate	High	Major	Substantial adverse
VP 5	PROW users	High	Moderate	High	Major	Substantial adverse
VP6	PROW users	High	Moderate / minor	High	Moderate	Substantial adverse
VP 7	PROW users	High	Not specifically reported, but 7.11 bp 2 = negligible	High	None	Negligible
VP 8	Road users	Low	Minor / negligible	Low	Moderate	Minor adverse
VP 9	Road users	Low	Minor / negligible	Low	Major	Moderate adverse
VP 10	Road users	Low	Minor / negligible	Low	Moderate	Minor adverse
VP 11	Road users	Low	Major to the outside, moderate minor to the interior	High	Major	Substantial adverse

7.9 What is common to both assessments is that in every case the effects are **adverse**. I consider that the magnitude of change is much greater than the LVA assessed which leads me to conclude a much higher degree of harm.

7.10 My overall conclusion in terms of visual impact is that the proposal would result in an unacceptable degree of harm to everyone who lives by the

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site, walks past the site, travels past the site on the train and everyone who uses the northside road to visit the important heritage assets and all who use the Parish Hall. That is a significant number of high sensitivity receptors.

7.11 Changes to the proposals

7.12 It is acknowledged that this iteration of the scheme has omitted an area of housing to the south-west of the Church but in reality, the loss of this element has not reduced the degree of harm as there will still be a row of houses located only some 45m from the edge of the site. My photo 09 demonstrates the relative scale of the proposed buildings on the site.

- Omission of the northern parcel of land
- Pushing some of the remaining houses back by circa 30m

7.13 The reality is that these changes will not have any material impact on the fundamental change i.e. from of a rural field to a residential development. The previous Inspector was abundantly clear that the scheme would cause an unacceptable degree of harm as a matter of principle.

7.14 Fig 03 and 08 in my appendices illustrate the actual change in the view between buildings that are 65m away (original scheme) and 90m away (revised / current scheme). It is clear that there is no meaningful difference.

7.15 The simple fact is that the revised scheme has been wholly unsuccessful in reducing harms to an acceptable level.

7.16 It is my professional opinion that no matter how the scheme was to be amended in terms of layout, the primary harms would persist and that means that the scheme would remain as unacceptable in principle as established by the previous Inspector.

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7.17 **Nighttime views**

7.18 Whilst the site itself does not contain any lights, it is acknowledged that there is inevitably some light spill from the properties at Doverdale Park, but this is low level in terms of the actual fittings and in terms of lux levels.

7.19 Residential developments, however well designed, will include streetlights, low level bollards lights as well as the normal house / window lights. Most houses include some form of security lighting that come on at random times of the night as pedestrians or animals pass by. Cars moving in and out of this landscape will add further impact.

7.20 There will be some harm caused by this lighting and this also needs to be included in the planning balance.

8.0 **Mitigation**

8.1 The current scheme is only different from the original in terms of quantum of development and the precise location of some of the units. The type, style and size of the units is the same and the primary harms are the same.

8.2 The current appeal scheme has excluded the northern part of the field from its red line boundary. This means that mitigation or enhancement measures must now be contained within the reduced site area. This also means that the likelihood of new planting providing acceptable or appropriate levels of screening will be greatly reduced.

8.3 It is an accepted design principle that screen planting is more effective when placed nearest to the viewer and not nearest to the object to be screened. Howsoever any planting is to be arranged, views of these 102 new houses would remain even when the planting is mature.

8.4 Residents of the new units will also want views of the land to the north and the Church. A view out will also allow a view in.

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- 8.5 It is my opinion that the omission of some 30 units does not change that conclusion. The harms are slightly reconfigured but remain and I do not consider that it is possible to properly mitigate the level of harm as identified.
- 8.6 It is acknowledged that there might be an increase in biodiversity net gain, but I do not consider that this would outweigh the harms caused.
- 8.7 Likewise, whilst some parts of the WCC LCA guidance does point to the benefits of planting trees and hedgerows, when the previous Inspector considered this matter, she concluded –

'Even if the primary characteristics set out on the Landscapes of Worcestershire Landscape Information Sheet for Principal Timbered Farmlands...are conserved and enhanced in any landscaping scheme, I do not consider that this results in compliance with Policy SWDP 25 taken in totality. Rather, I consider that the proposed development, as a whole, would be harmful to the open countryside, landscape character, and upon the character of the settlement of Hampton Lovett'.

9.0 Summary & conclusions

- 9.1 The application site lies adjacent to and within the setting of the Church of St Mary. The church is Grade I listed, falling within the top 2.5% of all listed buildings nationally and considered to be of exceptional architectural and historic interest.
- 9.2 It is also the setting for two Grade 2 heritage assets. Visitors to these assets are in the highest bracket of sensitivity.
- 9.3 The site is in open view from Monarch's Way, the National Route that traverses along the length of the northern boundary of the site. Users of this route are also in the highest bracket of sensitivity. The site is clearly visible from residents of The Forest as they walk or drive to their houses and to people who use the Parish Hall.
- 9.4 The site is clearly visible from Doverdale Mobile Home Park which the Architect described as vulnerable receptors. The appellant also asserts, through the Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) that the proposed buildings will be seem merely as an extension of those at Doverdale, despite the fact they could not be more different.
- 9.5 The two things are plainly and patently of a completely different type and scale of development. Doverdale is made up of single storey mobile homes and the proposed scheme is a suburban estate of primarily two storey brick-built houses.
- 9.6 The previous Inspector sets out, in very clear terms, at 20 (p4) of the Appeal Decision that *'An Estate of modern suburban dwellings would appear even more uncharacteristic, being at odds with those mobile homes, the agricultural land, the dispersed dwellings and the linear housing along The Forest and other wayside dwellings. The current scheme might be marginally different in number and layout but are still equally as uncharacteristic and unacceptable'*.

- 9.7 The current iteration is only different in terms of quantity and not type of development. It has omitted 30 units from the NW corner of the scheme but has only pushed the remaining houses some 30m further away from the Grade 1 listed Church.
- 9.8 It is my professional opinion that these changes would not have any meaningful effect on reducing or removing the harms caused and that the scheme remains as incongruous and harmful as originally concluded by the Inspector.
- 9.9 The site is locally valued as it is important to those people who live around it, walk past it or gain glimpses of it from nearby roads. In addition, I conclude that this site is, as set out in Box 5.1 and Technical Guidance Note02/21, a 'valued landscape' and is therefore of a much higher sensitivity than considered by the appellant.
- 9.10 Even if this Inspector finds that it is not a 'valued landscape' under either Box 5.1 and / or TGN 02/21, there can be no question that the level of harm as previously identified has not reduced, but merely changed slightly in arrangement and orientation. The primary harms remain.
- 9.11 The current appeal scheme has excluded the northern part of the field from its red line boundary. This means that mitigation or enhancement measures must now be contained within the reduced site area. This also means that the likelihood of new planting providing acceptable or appropriate levels of screening will be greatly reduced. It is an accepted fact that screen planting is more effective when placed nearest to the viewer and not nearest to the object to be screened. However, any planting is to be arranged, views of these 102 new houses would remain.
- 9.12 Whilst it is accepted that there might be some benefits with new planting and various new grassland and riparian regimes, these must be weighed in the balance of the harms to landscape character and visual impact.

- 9.13 In any case, I do not believe that these should be considered to be actual benefits per se because were it not for the proposed scheme, they would not be required.
- 9.14 Likewise, whilst some parts of the WCC LCA guidance does point to the benefits of planting trees and hedgerows, when the previous Inspector considered this matter, she concluded –
- 'Even if the primary characteristics set out on the Landscapes of Worcestershire Landscape Information Sheet for Principal Timbered Farmlands...are conserved and enhanced in any landscaping scheme, I do not consider that this results in compliance with Policy SWDP 25 taken in totality. Rather, I consider that the proposed development, as a whole, would be harmful to the open countryside, landscape character, and upon the character of the settlement of Hampton Lovett'.*
- 9.15 I wholly disagree with the submitted Landscape and Visual Appraisal, at 7.6, where the overall conclusion on the impact on landscape character says *'On balance, therefore, the overall effect on the character of the site is considered to be moderate/minor adverse. While new built form would be introduced, the character of the site would 'on the whole' remain intact'*.
- 9.16 It is my opinion that the introduction of 102 houses with associated roads and domestic paraphernalia will cause major harm to the character of this landscape.
- 9.17 Localised effects are generally the most important and include everyone who lives near the site and everyone who walks past it. These changes would be discernible in local views from nearby residential properties, from the National Route / Public Right of Way of Monarch's Way to the northern boundary of the site, from the Grade 1 Listed Church of St Mary and All Saints as well as from the road passing the front of the site and the elevated railway passing the rear of the site and most if not all of these receptors are of high sensitivity.

- 9.18 Of considerable importance is the recent letter from Historic England, dated 8th November 2022, which says *'the proposed loss of this open pasture and its replacement with housing would clearly have a considerable impact on the rural character and cause harm to the significance of the church through development within its setting'*. The church is Grade I listed, falling within the top 2.5% of all listed buildings nationally and considered to be of exceptional architectural and historic interest.
- 9.19 Paragraph 174 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment and it is clear, even from the submitted LVA, that this scheme does not achieve this. In my opinion, the scheme remains as a harmful urban encroachment into the open countryside.
- 9.20 The previous Inspector found *'development in this location would have a harmful visual impact upon the open countryside and upon the character of the settlement of Hampton Lovett'* and did *'not consider this to be appropriate to, or integrate with, the character of the landscape setting'*, and so she concluded that *'in this respect the proposal fails to accord with Policy SWDP25.'*
- 9.21 The site has been through various planning procedures and has failed at each attempt because of the harms it would cause.
- 9.22 It is my opinion that the harms are, in effect, just the same with the current scheme and it so, also, does not accord with Policy SWDP25. The adverse impacts on the natural environment, landscape character and visual amenities of the area that would arise from the development are significant and need to be weighed in the overall planning balance.

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Chartered Landscape Architect
for and on behalf of Potterton Associates Ltd

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Appendix 1. LVIA Methodology

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This assessment methodology has been developed in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) Third Edition published jointly by Landscape Institute (LI) and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) in April 2013.
- 1.2 Consideration has also been given to the following:
- *Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/11)*
 - *Landscape Character Assessment – Guidelines for England and Scotland (The Countryside Agency and Scottish National Heritage, 2002)*
 - *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (Natural England)*
 - *An approach to Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (2019 Natural England)*
- 1.3 The guidelines state that there is no standard methodology for the quantification of landscape and visual impacts. The methodology used in each instance needs to be appropriate and proportionate to the specific site and needs to be established incorporating the necessary degree of professional judgment. This assessment will therefore consider impacts upon:
- *the physical landscape elements of the site and its immediate surroundings*
 - *the visual amenity of views towards the site*
 - *the consequential effects on the surrounding landscape or settlement character.*
- 1.4 The emphasis on 'likely significant effects' stresses the need for an approach that is proportional to the scale of the project that is being assessed and the nature of its likely effects. This applies to 'appraisals' of landscape and visual impacts outside the formal requirements of EIA as well as those that are part of a formal assessment (GLVIA3 p12).
- 1.5 Whilst there are differing levels of assessment, depending on the scale of a project and whether, for example, it forms part of an EIA submission, is an 'appraisal' or an 'assessment', the overall principles and the core steps in the process are the same but there are specific and clearly defined procedures in EIA which LVIA must fit within.
- 1.6 The assessment process considers landscape and visual matters as separate issues, where landscape impacts relate to physical changes to the landscape and visual impacts relate to changes in available views. It is necessary to bring these two assessments together in order to identify any changes that the proposals may have on landscape character. Where appropriate, the assessment then also considers the potential of any cumulative effects.
- 1.7 These effects may be positive or negative depending on the baseline conditions of the receiving environment. In accordance with the published guidance, landscape (physical elements and character) and visual impacts are assessed separately.

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- 1.8 Landscape impacts relate to physical changes to the nature and quality of the individual landscape elements and characteristics on the site itself and the consequential effect of these changes on the landscape or townscape character of the surrounding areas.
- 1.9 Landscape 'receptors' are elements or groups of elements which will be directly or indirectly affected by the proposals. These elements consist of natural and cultural factors and include topography, vegetation, watercourses, public rights of way, buildings, historic features and land use, and the effects that these have on the character of the site.
- 1.10 This methodology uses the word 'impact' as meaning as the action being taken, and 'effect' meaning the change resulting from that action.
- 1.11 The definition of 'landscape' applies to all types of rural landscape, marine and coastal landscapes (seascapes) as well as the landscapes of urban areas to include villages, towns and cities (townscapes).
- 1.12 The assessment normally considers the landscape and visual effects during the following phases -
- *during construction;*
 - *on completion of the construction; and*
 - *15 years after completion when mitigation is fully established (residual effects).*

2. Landscape Character

- 2.1 Landscape Character results from a recognisable pattern of landscape (both natural and manmade) and visual factors, based principally upon topography, land use, landscape or street pattern, typical building types and historic associations.
- 2.2 A description of the typical characteristics of the surrounding landscape character area is given in the baseline assessment. The sensitivity of any given landscape character area to change is dependent on a complex range of factors, many of which are rather subjective in nature. The principal factors are:
- *baseline quality and condition of the Character Area*
 - *activities of the viewers within the receptor area*
 - *physical, visual and historic links between the site and the receptor area*
 - *proximity of proposals to the receptor area*
 - *degree of physical change to a receptor area*
 - *nature and extent of public and private views towards the site from the receptor area.*
- 2.3 The assessment process consists of three stages. Firstly the sensitivity of the landscape or visual receptor is considered. The magnitude and the nature of the impacts are then assessed. Both the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of the impacts are then combined to identify the significance of the impact. Impacts may be positive or negative, direct or indirect and may be short, medium or long-term in duration.

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- 2.4 The long-term or residual impacts likely to result from the proposals (those that remain after the establishment of the mitigation measures) are presented at the end of the assessment.
- 2.5 GLVIA3 guidance does not provide absolute criteria for the evaluation of landscape and visual impacts, so this is based upon the experience and professional judgment of a chartered landscape architect, using a methodology that conforms to the guidelines. In order to provide a structured and consistent approach, the various criteria used are set out below.

3. Landscape Sensitivity

- 3.1 The level of effect is determined through an understanding of both the nature of the receptor (**Sensitivity**) and the nature of the effect (**Magnitude**).
- 3.2 **Sensitivity** is determined by consideration of both the **susceptibility** to change and the **value** placed on the resource. The LVIA will present a reasoned summary of the overall effects on the landscape character and visual receptors from the specific development proposals. Landscape sensitivity is determined by consideration of both the **susceptibility** to change and the **value** placed on the landscape resource.
- 3.3 **Value** of a landscape receptor depends on a variety of considerations including international, national or local designation, its contribution to a community or its cultural significance e.g. landscapes reflected through literature, poetry, art etc.
- 3.4 **Susceptibility** of landscape receptors is defined as the ability of the landscape receptor to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation. Where appropriate the susceptibility of the landscape resource will be described on a verbal scale with defined criteria such as:

High – The receptor is less able to accommodate the type of development proposed without undue negative consequences to the baseline situation. Attributes that make up the character of the landscape offer limited opportunities for accommodating the change without those key characteristics being detrimentally altered.

Medium - The receptor is partly able to accommodate the type of development proposed without undue negative consequences to the baseline situation. Attributes that make up the character of the landscape offer some opportunities for accommodating the change without those key characteristics being detrimentally altered.

Low - The receptor is more able to accommodate the type of development proposed without undue negative consequences to the baseline situation. Attributes that make up the character of the landscape are resilient to being changed whilst other elements in the landscape may benefit from change where these are at contrast to the existing general landscape character.

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3.5 The factors used to define the sensitivity of the landscape receptors are:

- *Landscape quality – the physical state of repair of the individual element*
- *Landscape value – the relative value that is attached to the individual landscape element*
- *Contribution to landscape/settlement character – the contribution of an individual element or group of elements to the local sense of place*
- *Scope for replacement – the ability or otherwise to replace an individual element or group of elements*
- *Main trends for change – the degree of stability or level of change generally being experienced by the landscape.*

3.6 Where necessary, variations of these characteristics within the local landscape/townscape and within the site will be identified. The criteria used to assess the sensitivity of the landscape elements or receptors are set out below.

Table 1. Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors

Sensitivity	Receptor
Very High	Elements in very good condition and/or with particularly distinctive or positive contribution to a high quality local or regional character. This may include internationally important landscape features
High	Elements in good or above average condition and/or that make strongly positive contribution to landscape character. May include nationally important landscape features
Medium	Elements in reasonably good condition and/or that make an average contribution to the local character, which may include locally important landscape features
Low	Elements in below average condition and/or that are not particularly distinctive local features
Negligible	Elements in very poor condition and/or that do not contribute positively to local character

4. Magnitude of Landscape effects

4.1 The criteria for assessing the magnitude of landscape effects are based upon the degree of physical change that will occur as a result of the proposals, the compatibility of these changes with the overall trends for change within the landscape and the consequential effects that these changes may have on the landscape or settlement character.

4.2 It is important to note that in order to be placed in a particular category of magnitude, it is not necessary to match all the criteria in the 'change' column.

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Table 2 Magnitude of change to Landscape receptors

Magnitude	Change
Major	<p>Major alteration to or complete loss of key elements, features and characteristics of the baseline condition.</p> <p>The size and scale or geographical extent of changes are considered large due to the extent and proportion of loss of existing landscape components and extent of alteration of aesthetic and perceptual qualities which are critical to the landscape character.</p> <p>The duration of effect would be considered long term and would either be irreversible or very difficult to reverse in practical terms.</p>
Moderate	<p>Notable alteration to or significant loss of key elements, features and characteristics of the baseline condition.</p> <p>The size and scale and/or geographical extents of change are considered medium due to the extent and proportion of loss of existing landscape components and extent of alteration to aesthetic and perceptual qualities and would cause a noticeable difference to the landscape character or existing landscape components.</p> <p>The duration of effect would be considered medium term and / or potentially reversible, although it may not be practical to do so.</p>
Minor	<p>Small alterations to some key elements, features and characteristics of the baseline condition.</p> <p>The size and scale and/or geographical extents of change are considered low due to the extent and proportion of loss of existing landscape components and extent of alteration to aesthetic and perceptual qualities and would cause only a small change to the landscape character and/or existing landscape components.</p> <p>The duration of effect would be considered short term and / or potentially reversible and, in practical terms, this reversal would be achievable.</p>
Negligible	<p>Barely discernible alterations to key elements, features and characteristics of the baseline condition.</p> <p>The proposed scheme would be barely perceptible or entirely appropriate in its context and would cause no perceptible change to its landscape components, aesthetic and perceptual qualities and character.</p> <p>The duration of effect would be considered short term / temporary and / or easily reversible, and in practical terms would very easily be achievable.</p>
None	<p>No change to the baseline condition.</p>

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5. Visual Impact

- 5.1 GLVIA3 guidance defines visual impacts as ‘*the changes that arise in the composition of available views as a result of changes to the landscape, to people’s responses to the changes and to the overall effects with respect to visual amenity*’.
- 5.2 It is important to note that visual receptors are exclusively human beings.
- 5.3 The assessment methodology consists of three stages. Firstly, the sensitivity of the visual receptor is considered. The magnitude and the nature of the impacts are then assessed. The sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of the impact(s) are then combined to identify the significance of the impact. Impacts may be positive or negative, direct or indirect and may be short, medium or long-term in duration.
- 5.4 As with Landscape sensitivity, visual sensitivity is determined by consideration of both the **susceptibility** to change and the **value** placed on the view or visual resource.
- 5.5 The **Value** of a view experienced by a receptor group, or its visual amenity depends on a variety of considerations including international, national or local designation/recognition, its contribution to the visual amenity of a community or its cultural significance e.g. views recognised through the arts etc.
- 5.6 Where appropriate the value of the visual resource will be described on a scale with defined criteria such as:

Table 3 Value of view

Value	Description
Very high	Located within National Park, AONB etc and experienced by large numbers of people, marked on OS maps, mentioned in widely published literature etc.
High	Located within AGLV, country park, publicly open property (i.e. National Trust) Likely to be a key part of the reason for the visit.
Medium	Not designated but valued locally such as village green, local landmark, assigned a name etc
Limited	Low - degraded, industrial, blighted by adjacent uses etc
Potential	A currently degraded or poor view that could be improved through positive interventions associated with the scheme

- 5.7 The **Susceptibility of visual receptors** is considered to be a “function of the occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations; and the extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focused on the views and the visual amenity they experience at particular locations”⁷ (LI and IEMA 2013: 113).

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- 5.8 Value and Susceptibility are then considered together to provide a reasoned judgement on the overall level of **sensitivity** of the visual context and views from the visual receptor group. This is set out on a scale of High, Medium, Low and Negligible. Higher sensitivity is more likely to occur with increasing value and/or susceptibility to change. Lower sensitivity is more likely to occur with reduced value and/or susceptibility to change.
- 5.9 Evaluating the sensitivity of each visual receptor requires consideration of both the visual receptor's susceptibility to change arising from the proposal and the value attached to the view by the receptor - Susceptibility to Change + Value = Sensitivity.
- 5.10 The rationale used to assess the sensitivity of the visual receptors are set out in Table 3 below. It is important to note that in order to be placed in a particular category of sensitivity, it is not necessary to match all the criteria in the 'description' column.

Table 4 Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

Sensitivity	Description
Very High	<p>A viewer with a very high susceptibility/vulnerability to change with a specific interest in the view, prolonged viewing opportunities and a very high value placed upon the view. Examples include -</p> <p>Visitors to very high value landscapes i.e. Internationally or Nationally designated sites such as World Heritage Site, National Park, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Special Landscape Area, National Trail, Registered Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Monument, Grade I and II* listed buildings.</p> <p>Recognised scenic travel routes and other places where the views are the major contributor to the visit.</p>
High	<p>A viewer with a high susceptibility/vulnerability to change with a particular interest in the view, prolonged viewing opportunities and a high value placed upon the view (see Table 7). Examples include –</p> <p>Receptors in landscapes of Regional or County importance e.g. Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV), country parks, long distance trails, Grade II listed buildings, Conservation Areas etc).</p> <p>Users of other well-used visitor destinations and recreation areas, including long distance / themed trails, touring routes, cycle paths, canals, rights of way where the view is an important reason for the visit /journey</p> <p>Residents at home using rooms normally occupied during daytime hours and are likely to experience prolonged views.</p> <p>Important wider visual function. Visible in the wider area.</p>

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Medium

A viewer with a moderate susceptibility/vulnerability to change; with some interest in their surroundings, a medium period of exposure to the view and a moderate value placed upon the view. Examples include –

People whose attention is not solely focused on the view or for short periods of time while passing through the landscape / townscape.

People involved in outdoor recreational facilities where landscape appreciation is important but unlikely to be a primary motive i.e. fishing or golf.

Residents with limited view of the development; People at their place of work/educational institutions where visual amenity is an important contributor to the setting and quality of working life.

Important local visual function. Locally visible but limited influence.

Low

A viewer with a low susceptibility/vulnerability to change; with little or no interest in their surroundings, attention not focused on the landscape and a low value placed on the view. Examples include –

People using busy main roads where their view is focused on the road.

People at their place of work where the appreciation of the setting is of limited importance to the quality of working life;

People engaged in outdoor recreation or sport which does not involve or depend upon an appreciation of views;

People using infrequently used / inaccessible public rights of way and likely to be travelling for a purpose other than to enjoy the view. Usually in landscapes / townscapes of low to moderate value.

No important visual function. Limited local visibility.

Very Low

A viewer with a very low susceptibility/vulnerability to change; with no interest in their surroundings, attention not focused on the landscape and a very low value placed on the view. Examples include -

People moving past the view and often at high speed (e.g. motorways and main line railways). People in degraded landscapes / townscapes of low value.

No visual function and no visibility.

6. Magnitude of Visual Effects

6.1 In the evaluation of the effects on views and the visual amenity of the identified receptors, the magnitude or scale of visual change is assessed by looking at -

- *the distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development*
- *the extent of the area over which the changes would be visible*

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- *the angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor*
- *the nature of the view in relation to the sequence of views experienced in arriving at the viewpoint*
- *the scale of change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development*
- *the degree of contrast or integration of any new features or changes in the landscape with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics in terms of form, scale and mass, line, height, colour and texture*
- *the duration and nature of the effect, whether temporary or permanent, intermittent or continuous.*

6.2 Criteria used to assess the magnitude of the visual effects are set out below -

Table 5 Magnitude of Visual Impacts

Magnitude	Impact
Major	<p>Total or large-scale change to the existing composition of the view and their distinctive features and elements</p> <p>The addition of new but uncharacteristic conspicuous features and elements in the views (adverse change)</p> <p>The removal, restoration and/ or replacement of existing highly uncharacteristic features and elements in the views (beneficial change).</p>
Moderate	<p>Partial or noticeable change to the existing composition of the views and their notable features and elements</p> <p>The addition of new but uncharacteristic noticeable features and elements in the views (adverse change)</p> <p>The removal, restoration and/ or replacement of existing moderately uncharacteristic features and elements in the views (beneficial change).</p>
Minor	<p>Slight change to the existing composition of the views and their features and elements</p> <p>The addition of new but uncharacteristic perceptible features and elements in the views (adverse change)</p> <p>The removal, restoration and/ or replacement of existing perceptibly uncharacteristic features and elements in the views (beneficial change).</p>
Negligible	Barely perceptible change to baseline view
No Change	No change to view

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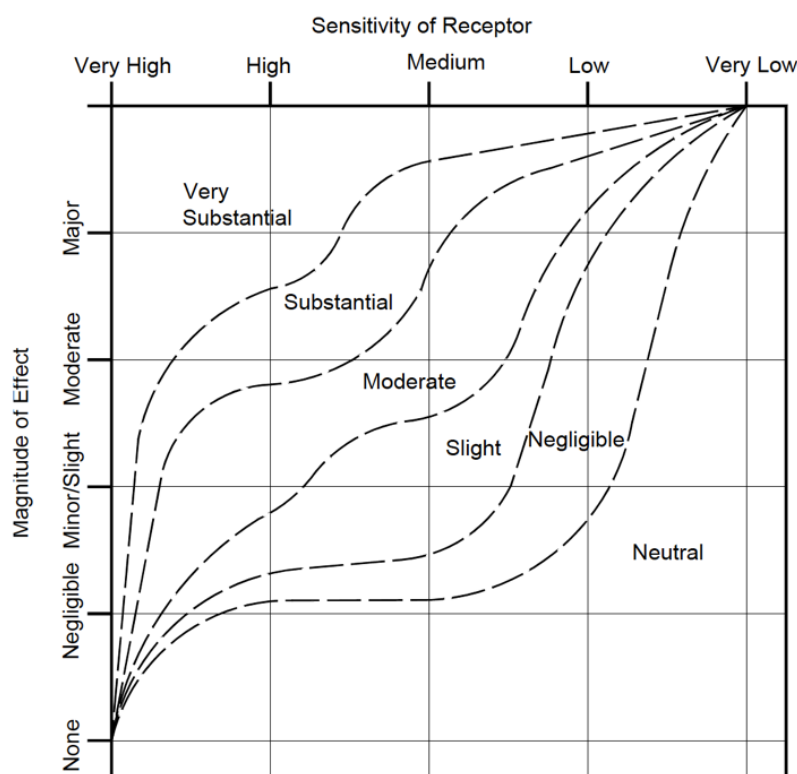
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7. Impact Significance

- 7.1 The significance of the impacts is determined by a combination of the **sensitivity** of the receptor or receiving environment and the **magnitude** of the predicted changes.
- 7.2 The scale shown in Significance Matrix in the following table has been adopted to assess the significance of both the landscape and the visual impacts. The basis of this scale is derived from case studies and professional experience in accordance with the LI/IEMA guidance.

Table 6 Significance Matrix



8. Significance definitions

- 8.1 Conclusions on the significance of an impact can be further described as set out below. It is important to note that in order to be placed in a particular category of significance, it is not necessary to match all the criteria in the 'description' column.
- 8.2 These definitions are provided to cover both visual and character and if necessary, can be used as individual topics.

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Table 7 Significance level (Visual)

Effect	Description
Substantial adverse	<p>Cause a major deterioration in the existing views</p> <p>In terms of magnitude, would likely relate to the majority of views afforded by the receptor group and/ or to all or very large extents of each of those views.</p> <p>In terms of sensitivity, would likely to affect views afforded to receptors which are deemed to be of higher value or to receptors and their views considered to be very susceptible to this form of development.</p> <p>Effects are long term and may be permanent</p>
Moderate adverse	<p>Cause an obvious deterioration to the view of a receptor of medium to high sensitivity that would constitute a clear change in the view or introduce a discordant element into the view.</p> <p>In terms of magnitude, would likely relate to a moderate proportion of range of views afforded by the receptor group and/ or to a large proportion of each of those views (medium scale)</p> <p>In terms of sensitivity, would likely to affect views afforded by receptors which are deemed to be of more moderate value or to receptors and their views considered to have a medium level of susceptible to this form of development</p> <p>Effects are likely to be long term but moderated by smaller scales of change or may be short term but with larger scales of change.</p>
Slight adverse	<p>Cause a limited deterioration to the view of a receptor of medium to high sensitivity that would constitute a noticeable change in the view or would introduce uncharacteristic features or elements into the view or an obvious deterioration to the view of low sensitivity.</p>
Negligible adverse	<p>Result in a barely perceptible change in the view, associated with the introduction of uncharacteristic features or elements.</p>
Neutral	<p>Not be visible to the receptor and any associated mitigation would represent an indiscernible change to the baseline situation.</p>
Negligible beneficial	<p>Result in a barely perceptual change and improvement to the view, associated with the introduction of characteristic features or elements</p>
Slight beneficial	<p>Result in a slight improvement to the view of a receptor of medium to high sensitivity or an obvious improvement to the view of a receptor of low sensitivity.</p>
Moderate beneficial	<p>Result in a moderate improvement to the view of a receptor of medium to high sensitivity or a major improvement to the view of a receptor of low sensitivity</p>

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Substantial beneficial Result in a major improvement to the view of a receptor of high sensitivity.

Table 8 **Significance level (landscape)**

Effect	Description
Substantial adverse	<p>Be at considerable variance with the character of the landscape</p> <p>Degrade or lose the integrity of characteristic features or elements</p> <p>Damage or lose the sense of place or local distinctiveness of the area</p> <p>In terms of magnitude, would likely relate to all or very large parts/ areas or extent of the receptor</p> <p>In terms of sensitivity, would likely to affect receptors deemed to be of higher value or very susceptible to this form of development</p> <p>Effects are likely to be long term and may be permanent.</p>
Moderate adverse	<p>Conflict with the character of the landscape</p> <p>Have a negative impact on some characteristic features or elements</p> <p>Diminish the sense of place or local distinctiveness</p> <p>In terms of magnitude, would probably relate to some parts / areas of the receptor</p> <p>In terms of sensitivity, would probably affect receptors deemed to be of moderate value or moderately susceptible to this form of development</p> <p>Effects are likely to be long term but moderated by smaller scales of change or may be short term but with larger scales of change.</p>
Slight adverse	<p>Be at variance with the existing characteristic features or elements</p> <p>Detract from the sense of place or local distinctiveness of the area</p> <p>In terms of magnitude, would likely relate to small parts / areas or extent of the receptor or be described as small scale</p> <p>In terms of sensitivity, would likely to affect receptors deemed to be of lower value or low susceptible to this form of development</p> <p>Effects may be long term but of negligible size/ scale or short term and of a larger scale of change.</p>
Negligible	<p>Maintain the character of the landscape</p> <p>Complement/ blend in with the existing characteristic features or elements</p> <p>Enable the sense of place or local distinctiveness of the area to be retained</p>

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Slight beneficial

Complement the character of the landscape
Maintain or enhance the existing characteristic features or elements

Enable some of the sense of place or local distinctiveness of the area to be restored

In terms of magnitude, would likely relate to small parts/ areas or extent of the receptor – small scale

In terms of sensitivity, would likely to affect receptors deemed to be of lower value or low susceptible to this form of development
Effects may be long term but of negligible size/ scale or short term and of a larger scale of change.

Moderate beneficial

Enable the creation, repair, conservation or restoration of characteristic features or elements partially lost or diminished as a result of inappropriate management or prior development
Enable the sense of place or local distinctiveness of the area to be restored

In terms of magnitude, would likely relate to some parts/ areas or extent of the receptor – medium scale. In terms of sensitivity, would likely to affect receptors deemed to be of moderate value or moderately susceptible to this form of development

Effects are likely to be long term but moderated by smaller scales of change or may be short term but with larger scales of change.

Substantial beneficial

Greatly enhance the character of the landscape

Enable the creation, repair, conservation or restoration of characteristic features or elements lost or harmed as a result of inappropriate management or prior development

Greatly enhance the sense of place or local distinctiveness of the area

In terms of magnitude, would likely relate to all or very large parts/ areas or extent of the receptor – large scale

In terms of sensitivity, would likely to affect receptors deemed to be of higher value or very susceptible to this form of development
Effects are likely to be long term and may be permanent

9. Viewpoint selection

- 9.1 Viewpoints chosen for inclusion in the assessment are generally selected as one of the following –

Table 7 Viewpoint type

Type	Representing
Representative	Representing the experience of different types of visual receptor, where large numbers of viewpoints cannot all be included individually and where the levels of effects are unlikely to differ e.g. certain points may be chosen to represent the views of users of particular public footpaths and bridleways. Can also include groups of buildings.
Specific	Selected as promoted viewpoints e.g. specific local visitor attractions; viewpoints in areas of particularly noteworthy visual and/or recreational amenity such as landscapes with statutory landscape designations or viewpoints with particular cultural landscape associations.
Illustrative	Chosen specifically to demonstrate a particular effect, specific issues or to highlight a key characteristic.

10. Valued Landscape

- 10.1 This should not be confused with a site having a local value (or valued locally). Under the terms of the NPPF2 (Para 174/a), to be properly described as a 'valued landscape', a landscape (or part thereof) needs to either have a statutory status or have a specific quality or be specifically identified in the Local Development Plan.
- 10.2 Box 5.1 (on p84 of GLVIA3) sets out 8 broad criteria under which a landscape should be assessed to gain an understanding of its specific quality and therefore its 'value'.
- 10.3 A Technical Guidance Note was issued by The Landscape Institute entitled TGN 02/21: 'Assessing landscape value outside national designations'. This important document gives greater clarity on this topic to include 2 new categories to be considered in any assessment of whether a landscape can be described as 'valued' or not.
- 10.4 If the site lies within a designated or protected landscape (such as National Park, AONB or AGLV) then it could also be defined as being a valued landscape. Recent decision notices have assessed land outside but adjacent to an AONB's for example, as being valued under these criteria.
- 10.5 When assessing landscape value of a site as part of a planning application or appeal it is important to consider not only the site itself and its features/elements/characteristics/qualities, but also their relationship with and the role they play within the site's context. Value is best appreciated at the scale at which a landscape is perceived, and this is rarely on a field-by-field basis.

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10.6 When assessing a site / landscape using either Box 5.1 or TGN 02/21, the following 'gradation' terms are used -

Extraordinary
 Very good
 Good
 Ordinary
 Poor

11. Mitigation measures

11.1 Visual impact mitigation measures typically involve methods to either site the project so that it is less visible from sensitive viewpoints or to reduce the level of visual contrast between the project and the surrounding landscape. This is typically achieved by changing the forms, lines, colours and/or textures of the proposed project elements to better match those of the surrounding landscape (built or natural).

11.2 They may also include a reduction in the size or number of structures or changing the spatial arrangement of built components to reduce visual clutter or contrast. Residual impacts are those that are left after the project is complete and cannot be properly mitigated.

11.3 It is generally accepted that primary changes in character i.e. from an open field to a residential development, cannot be mitigated per se but can be counterbalanced or minimised through careful design. There are 5 main types or categories of mitigation –

Table 9 Mitigation types

Type	Description
Avoidance	This is <u>primary mitigation</u> and means avoiding the impact in the first instance by not taking a certain action or parts of an action i.e. moving a project (or its components) to take advantage of screening topography or vegetation.
Minimising	Minimising impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation – i.e. painting a structure to match its background to minimize visual contrast with the existing landscape.
Rectifying	Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment – i.e. re-vegetation of an area disturbed during project construction.
Reduction	Eliminating or reducing the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action i.e. continued removal of invasive plants species arising from site disturbance.

Land north of Droitwich

PINS APP/H1840/W/22/3305934

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Compensating

Counterbalancing the impact through planting either on / around the site or nearer to a receptor who may be adversely affected by the scheme. This can / will include ongoing management of said measure.
