

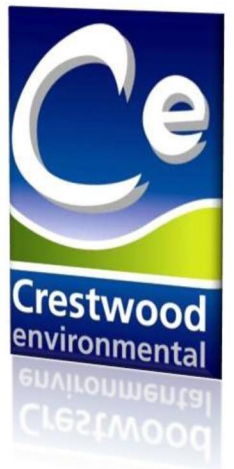


Landscape and Visual Appraisal for:

Proposed Residential Development at The Lakes, Swainshill, Nr. Hereford

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 SITE LOCATION AND SCOPE OF WORKS

1.1.1 Crestwood Environmental Ltd ('Crestwood'), a Registered Practice of the Landscape Institute, were commissioned by Foxley Tagg Planning Limited (The 'Client') to provide a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) in relation to proposed residential development ('the Proposed Development' – see below) on land at The Lakes, off the A438 at Swainshill, near Hereford, Herefordshire ('The Site') (NGR: SO 46001 41945) to accompany an outline application for planning permission.

Diagram 1 Site Location

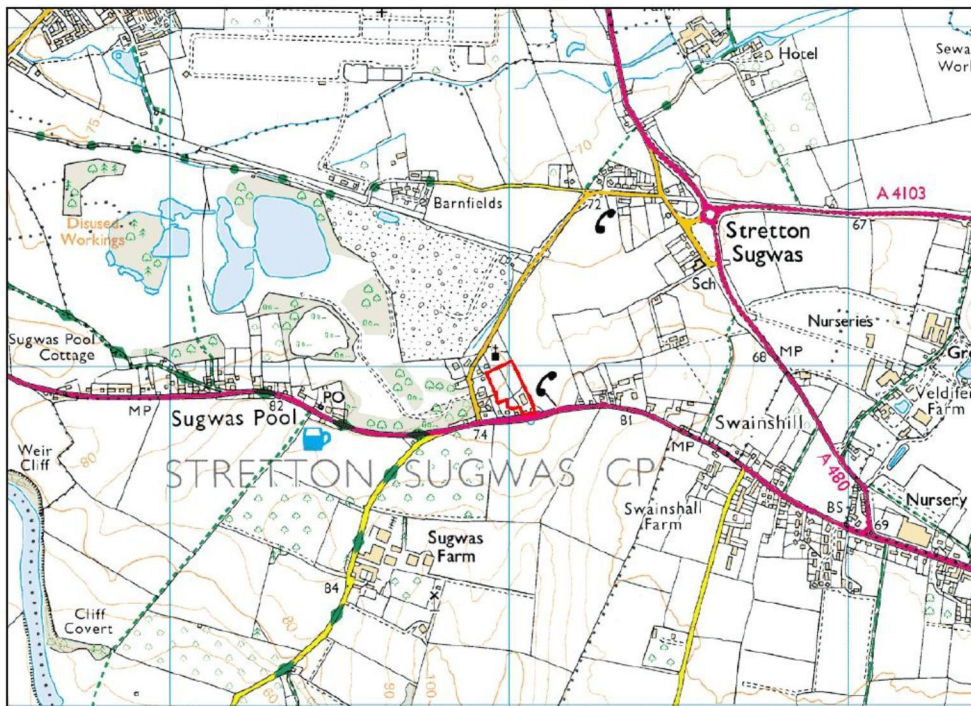


Diagram 2 Immediate Site Context (Bing Maps)



1.1.2 Crestwood have therefore undertaken an LVA of the Proposed Development which included the following key tasks:

- A desktop review of the landscape planning context for the Site and immediate area;
- A desktop study and web search of relevant background documents and maps, including reviews of aerial photographs, LPA publications and other landscape character assessments;
- Collated information about any relevant landscape designations, such as National Parks, and those parks and gardens listed on English Heritage's national register;

- A field assessment of local site circumstances including a photographic survey of viewpoints towards the Site, undertaken by a suitably qualified Landscape Consultant in October 2014; and
- An analysis of the likely visibility and visual effects arising from the Proposed Development.

1.2 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

1.2.1 The Proposed Development comprises:

- Demolition of an existing workshop building (and retention of an existing dwelling and adjacent outbuildings);
- Construction of 9 new buildings (7 dwellings, a show home and a 'design barn');
- A new shared surface access from the A438 to the new buildings;
- Off-road parking spaces;
- An 'outdoor living area'; and
- Retention of boundary vegetation.

1.2.2 The proposed layout (which has undergone a number of design iterations following receipt of input from the landscape and other environmental assessments undertaken) is shown indicatively in Diagram 3. This has a relatively low density of built elements and retained boundary tree and hedgerow vegetation, in keeping with the adjacent area of development and maintaining a high proportion of green to built development. As the planning application is for outline consent, there will be, subject to agreement of detailed design, some flexibility in the final built development layout.

Diagram 3 The Proposed Development Layout



1.3 METHODOLOGY

1.3.1 Landscape and visual assessment is comprised of a study of two separate but inter-linked components:

- **Landscape character** – which is the physical make-up and condition of the landscape itself. Landscape character arises from a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of physical and social elements, aesthetic factors and perceptual aspects; and
- **Visual amenity** – which is the way in which the Site is seen and appreciated; views to and from the Site, their direction, character and sensitivity to change.

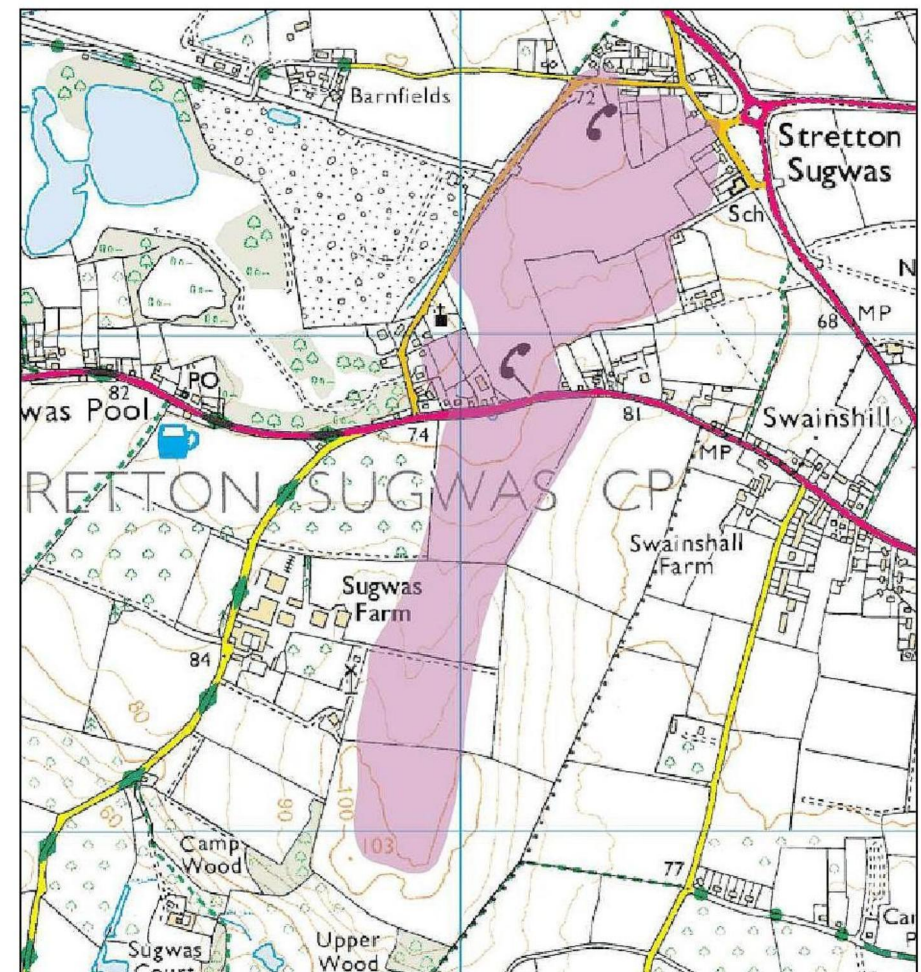
1.3.2 This assessment is conducted with regard to the principles set out in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment: Third Edition ('GLVIA3'), (Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, 2013) and has been carried out by a suitably qualified Chartered Landscape Architect (Karl Jones CMLI CEnv).

1.3.3 In this assessment, the initial study area extended to 2km in all directions from the edge of the Site, to help determine potential visibility and understand the wider sensitivity of the visual receptors. The extent of the initial study area was predicted, conservatively, to be the likely maximum distance where the Proposed Development could result in potentially significant landscape and visual effects, given the topography.

1.3.4 Fieldwork was undertaken in October 2014 to further understand the potential for significant landscape and visual effects and, following this, the Study area was subsequently reduced, as it was clear that effects would be more localised.

1.3.5 The combination of the fieldwork and desktop review established that the scale of the landscape and Proposed Development would limit likely significant adverse effects to within circa 750m of the Site. The Zone of Primary Visibility (ZPV) for the Proposed Development is illustrated in Diagram 4.

Diagram 4 Approximate Zone of Primary Visibility



2 BASELINE SITUATION

2.1 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL POLICY

General

- 2.1.1 An appreciation of the 'weight' to be attributed to any visual and landscape effects arising from development starts with an understanding of the planning context within which any such development is to be tested for its acceptability.
- 2.1.2 Strictly, in legal terms, there is no automatic right to a view. However, the enjoyment of a view could be an important part of the residential amenity of location (e.g. a neighbouring property), and its loss might therefore have an adverse impact on the residential amenity of that property (i.e. an environmental effect on humans).
- 2.1.3 It should be recognised that the landscape is dynamic, as is made clear within GLVIA3 (Para 2.13): *"Landscape is not unchanging. Many different pressures have progressively altered familiar landscapes over time and will continue to do so in the future, creating new landscapes. Today many of these drivers of change arise from the requirements for development to meet the needs of a growing and changing population and economy"*.

National Planning Policy

- 2.1.4 It is stated in paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012) that *"at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and*

decision-taking". The NPPF also recognises that *"the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: ...protecting and enhancing valued landscapes"*.

- 2.1.5 In Section 7 ("Requiring Good Design") of the NPPF, paragraph 61 states: *"Although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore, planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment."*

Local Policy

- 2.1.6 Herefordshire Council is preparing a Local Plan which will be made up of a number of documents including the Core Strategy and which sets the overall strategic planning framework for the county up to 2031. It does not allocate sites, but proposes broad strategic directions for growth. The Core Strategy was submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on 23 September 2014.
- 2.1.7 The Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was adopted on 23 March 2007 and guides development within the county until the adoption of the Local Plan - Core Strategy. The UDP has the status of a Development Plan Document. It is operative as part of the Local Development Framework and most of its policies have now been 'saved' until they are superseded by other emerging Development Plan Documents in the Local Plan.
- 2.1.8 The Pre-submission Core Strategy document (Herefordshire Council, May 2014) has a number of relevant landscape/visual related policies:

Policy SS6 – Environmental quality and local distinctiveness

Development proposals should conserve and enhance those environmental assets that contribute towards the county's distinctiveness, in particular its settlement pattern, landscape, biodiversity and historic assets and especially those with specific environmental designations. In addition, proposals should maintain and improve the effectiveness of those ecosystems essential to the health and wellbeing of the county's residents and its economy. Development proposals should be shaped through an integrated approach to planning the following environmental components from the outset, and based upon sufficient information to determine the effect upon each where they are relevant:

- landscape, townscape and local distinctiveness, especially in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- biodiversity and geodiversity;
- historic environment and heritage assets;
- the network of green infrastructure;
- local amenity, including light pollution, air quality and tranquillity;
- agricultural and food productivity and soils;
- physical resources, including minerals, management of waste, the water environment, renewable energy and energy conservation.

The management plans and conservation objectives of the county's international and nationally important features and areas will be material to future development proposals. Furthermore assessments of local features, areas and sites, where undertaken to define local distinctiveness, should inform proposals.

Where the benefits of proposals are considered to outweigh the adverse effects on the environment, or there are competing environmental objectives and full mitigation is not possible, compensatory measures should be advanced.

Policy LD1 – Landscape and townscape

Development proposals should be in accordance with landscape management objectives and townscape assessments and achieve all the following objectives:

- demonstrate that character of the landscape and townscape has positively influenced the design, scale, nature and site selection, including protection and enhancement of the setting of settlements and designated areas;
- conserve and enhance the natural, historic and scenic beauty of important landscapes and features, including Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, nationally and locally designated parks and gardens and conservation areas; through the protection of the area's character and by enabling appropriate uses, design and management;
- incorporate new landscape schemes and their management to ensure development integrates appropriately into its surroundings; and
- maintain and extend tree cover where important to amenity, through the retention of important trees, appropriate replacement of trees lost through development and new planting to support green infrastructure.

Policy LD3 – Green infrastructure

Development proposals should protect, manage and plan for the preservation of existing and delivery of new green infrastructure, and should achieve the following objectives:

1. identification and retention of existing green infrastructure corridors and linkages; including the protection of valued landscapes, trees, hedgerows, woodlands, water courses and adjoining flood plain;
2. provision of on-site green infrastructure; and
3. integration with, and connection to, the surrounding green infrastructure network.

Policy LD4 – Historic environment and heritage assets

Development proposals affecting heritage assets and the wider historic environment should achieve the following objectives:

1. the conservation, and where appropriate enhancement of, heritage assets and their settings that positively contribute to the character of a site, townscape and/or wider environment, including conservation areas;
2. the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their settings through appropriate management, uses and sympathetic design;
3. the retention, repair and sustainable use of heritage assets as a focus for wider regeneration schemes; and
4. the appropriate recording of heritage assets in mitigation of development impact, in cases where agreed loss occurs.

The scope of the works required to protect, conserve and enhance heritage assets and their settings should be proportionate to their significance. Development schemes should emphasise the original form and function of any asset and, where appropriate, improve the understanding of and public access to them.

2.1.9 The equivalent saved policies in the UDP are listed below.

S7 Natural and historic heritage

The following assets comprising the County's historic and natural heritage will be protected, restored or enhanced:

1. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
2. sites and features of international, national and local nature conservation interest, species of biodiversity interest and areas of geodiversity;
3. the historic heritage including archaeology, buildings and areas of historic or architectural importance, and natural landscapes; and
4. landscape features that contribute positively to local distinctiveness and quality of the local environment.

LA2 Landscape character and areas least resilient to change

Proposals for new development that would adversely affect either the overall character of the landscape, as defined by the Landscape Character Assessment and the Historic Landscape Characterisation or its key attributes or features, will not be permitted.

Proposals should demonstrate that landscape character has influenced their design, scale, nature and site selection. Where appropriate, developers will be encouraged to restore degraded or despoiled landscapes to their inherent character.

LA3 Setting of settlements

Development outside the built up areas of Hereford, the market towns and rural settlements, which is acceptable in terms of other Plan policies, will only be permitted where it would not have an adverse effect upon the landscape setting of the settlement concerned.

Important visual approaches into settlements, views of key buildings, open areas into development, green corridors, ridgelines and surrounding valued open countryside will be particularly protected and, where necessary, enhanced.

In appropriate new developments around existing settlements the creation of open space, urban parks, green wedges, and tree lines will be promoted where they complement and enhance landscape character and townscape.

HBA4 Setting of listed buildings

Development proposals which would adversely affect the setting of a listed building will not be permitted. The impact of the proposal will be judged in terms of scale, massing, location, detailed design and the effects of its uses and operations.

LA5 Protection of trees, woodlands and hedgerows

The enhancement and protection of individual trees, tree groups, woodlands and hedgerows will be secured by:

1. placing Tree Preservation Orders where necessary on trees, groups of trees and woodlands of amenity value, and making use of hedgerow protection legislation;
2. resisting proposals that would cause loss or damage to trees (including veteran trees), hedgerows, mature traditional orchards or woodlands which are worthy of retention. In particular, proposals affecting protected trees and Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodlands will be subject to rigorous examination. Where the felling of protected trees is accepted replacement planting will be sought;

3. requiring development proposals to include an acceptable landscaping scheme submitted in accordance with policy LA6, the retention of those trees and hedgerows considered important to local amenity, together with measures to ensure their protection during development, and the replacement of trees and woodland lost to development with an equivalent area of planting; and
4. where appropriate taking into account as a material consideration the Woodland Management Guidelines produced for the Malvern Hills and Wye Valley AONBs and the Government's England Forestry Strategy together with Forestry Commission guidance on Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodlands.

Management agreements to enable new or increased public access to woodlands may be entered into, particularly where there is a shortage of such opportunities within the particular locality.

LA6 Landscaping schemes

Landscaping schemes will be required to be submitted as an integral part of any development proposals that will affect the visual amenity or character of the location. Landscaping schemes will be required to:

1. assess the existing character and features of the particular site and its wider landscape character in accordance with policy LA2, indicating how these have contributed to the overall design approach and which features, including trees, will be removed;
2. indicate and make arrangements to protect and retain existing trees and hedgerows, in accordance with policy LA5 and also other landscape features worthy of retention; and
3. include new landscape works to ensure development integrates appropriately into its surroundings in terms of scale, enhances any existing character and features and especially takes the opportunity to remove eyesores and improve disfigured or despoiled land.

Landscaping works should be undertaken during development or as soon as practicable thereafter. In the case of major proposals, consideration should be given to advanced landscaping works being carried out before building or enabling works are commenced.

2.2 LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS

- 2.2.1 No part of the Site lies within or near to a statutorily designated landscape (an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or National Park).

- 2.2.2 No part of the Site lies within or near to a non-statutorily, locally, designated landscape.

2.3 LISTED BUILDINGS, SCHEDULED MONUMENTS AND CONSERVATION AREAS

- 2.3.1 A formal assessment of the historical setting of these heritage features falls outside the scope of this report and the professional experience of the report author. Irrespective of this, to help ascertain whether there were potential landscape-related effects of the Proposed Development on heritage features the following was determined:

- There are no Conservation Areas near to the Site or within the ZPV; and
- There are no Scheduled Monuments within the ZTV.

- 2.3.2 There is one Listed Building within 750m of the Site (Grade 2*) at St. Mary Magdalene's Church, directly north of the Site.

2.4 TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS

- 2.4.1 There are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) relating to the Site (Herefordshire Council, n.d.).

2.5 PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY AND OPEN ACCESS LAND

- 2.5.1 There are no public rights of way (PRoWs) or permissive access within the Site.
- 2.5.2 A small number of PRoWs lie near of the Site. PRoW (Definitive no. SS6) lies 550m north-northeast of the Site, on the edge of the ZPV. No other PRoWs lie within the ZPV other than local highways near the Site.

- 2.5.3 The Wye Valley Walk (recreational route) runs near the Site, but outwith the ZPV, circa 275m to the west-southwest at its nearest point
- 2.5.4 There is no Access Land, or Common Land within the ZPV.
- 2.5.5 Permissive access (outside the ZPV) is available within the restored Brockhall Quarry (75m west of the Site at its nearest point).
- 2.5.6 The A438 runs past the Site (east-to-west) to the immediate south of the Site. The A4103 runs northwards from the A438 (from a point circa 120m west of the Site) from Swainshill to Sutton Sugwas, a small village located circa 550m north-northeast of the Site.

2.6 LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION

- 2.6.1 The Site lies around 75mAOD but falls by around 5m from the northern boundary to the southern boundary. The landform has been fairly substantially modified by man.
- 2.6.2 The land cover within the Site is a combination of maturing (but relative young) trees, especially near the western and eastern boundaries, grassed areas and areas of hardstanding, buildings and bare ground. The existing buildings comprise of a dwelling (to be retained) on the road frontage, a stone and timber-panelled outbuilding, a large timber workshop building and a number of small shipping container converted buildings, near the entrance. Large areas are used for storage of building materials (timber etc.) and there were a number of cars parked on site at the time of the fieldwork.
- 2.6.3 The Site boundaries are a combination of hedgerows and trees, with some fencing and brick walls also present. The eastern boundary consists of a broadleaved (largely hawthorn) hedgerow, 4-6m in height. On the northern boundary lies a thick hedgerow with trees, including well-established yew trees.
- 2.6.4 The landform outside of the Site is relatively flat north of the A438, being only very mildly undulating, rising slightly to the east. To the south the land steadily rises by circa 30m to a point approximately 1km away. A small ridge extends north-northeastwards from this highpoint, towards the A438, located to the southeast of the Site. The land then undulates southwards but generally falls away to the River Wye.
- 2.6.5 To the immediate west of the Site are a number of dwellings (arranged in a similar pattern and of a similar size to those proposed). To the immediate north is St. Mary Magdalene's Church and churchyard. To the immediate east is arable farmland (large irregular hedgerow bound fields, fields becoming smaller further to the east).
- 2.6.6 To the south lies the A438 road and beyond lies a combination of arable farmland and modern orchards (large scale rectilinear fields), with occasional conifer shelterbelts. Large modern outbuildings are present at Sugwas Farm on an elevated position (circa 85mAOD) 500m to the southwest.
- 2.6.7 To the immediate west of the residential area at Swainshill is the restored Brockhall Quarry, a small operational truck depot and a village hall. To the north of there is a restored landfill (mostly pasture grassland (medium-large fields) and boundary woodland belts) with an environmental management compound present in the northeast corner. Generally mature woodland borders the quarry and landfill.
- 2.6.8 Circa 130m to the east of the Site, beyond an arable field, is a dwelling called Kemeys, which is slightly elevated relative to the Site at c. 79mAOD and has an open aspect towards the Site. A ribbon style layout of dwellings extends eastwards from Kemeys. These properties generally have interrupted views towards the Site due to the

combination of landform and tree and hedgerow vegetation.

2.7 LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENTS

2.7.1 The Site lies within the **Herefordshire Lowlands** National Character Area (NCA) (Natural England, 2013). The key characteristics for this character area are listed as:

- Gently undulating landscape with localised steep-sided hills in the centre and wide agricultural flood plains.
- Much of the area is underlain by Old Red Sandstone, with localised deposits of alluvium and glacial drift. There is also a small area of Silurian limestone and siltstone at Shucknall Hill. Fertile soils support intensive mixed agriculture, especially on the better drained glacial river terraces.
- Wide, meandering river valleys drain the area, including the Wye, a major ecological and recreational asset, and the Lugg, and the valleys of the rivers Frome and Arrow also offer rich habitats.
- Pasture with occasional wet meadows and permanent grassland along the rivers. Low hedgerows with sparse tree cover. Arable cultivation on lower-lying land.
- Localised traditional and bush orchards and occasional hop fields planted with windbreaks.
- Several historic parklands include Humphry Repton's landscape improvements at Garnons and Hampton Court, Capability Brown's landscape at Berrington Hall, Uvedale Price's Foxley and numerous medieval parks, many with important ancient and veteran trees.
- Timber-framed (black-and-white) buildings are characteristic with stone and red brick also used frequently as building materials.

- Dispersed rural settlement pattern throughout with scattered villages, hamlets, farmsteads and clustered settlements around commons. Historic market towns of Hereford and Leominster are the principal settlements.
- Tranquil and relatively undisturbed by major infrastructure aside from a few crossing A roads between Hereford, Hay-on-Wye and Leominster.

2.7.2 A County-wide Landscape Character Assessment has been undertaken (Herefordshire Council, Updated 2009). The Site lies within the **Central Herefordshire** Sub-regional Character Area and the **Principal Timbered Woodlands** Landscape Type. The key characteristics are listed as:

Primary:

- Hedgerows define field boundaries;
- Ancient wooded character portrayed by the hedgerow trees and woodland;
- Densely scattered hedgerow trees, predominantly of oak; and
- Filtered views between the hedgerow oaks.

Secondary:

- Organic enclosure pattern; and
- Small-scale landscapes.

2.7.3 The assessment states *"It is vital for the retention of landscape character that the organic pattern of enclosure is preserved and that a geometric pattern is not superimposed by subdividing fields or enlarging others and employing straight fence or hedge lines"*. It also states *"Modern development favouring groups or clusters of new houses*

would not be appropriate in this landscape”.

3 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ANALYSIS

3.1 VISIBILITY OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1.1 A Zone of Primary Visibility (ZPV) for the Proposed Development, based on the findings in the field is illustrated in Diagram 4, above.
- 3.1.2 The illustrated ZPV demonstrates the restricted visibility of the main development through the combination of woodland, major hedgerows, buildings and landform in the locality. It also demonstrates the few accessible viewpoints that the Proposed Development would be visible from; the ZPV not readily overlapping PRoWs or lengthy sections of road.
- 3.1.3 The ZPV is elongated in a north-south orientation, reflecting the higher ridge landform present to the southeast of the Site and the more open aspect and large fields without woodland to the north/northeast. Woodland to the west and southwest severely limits views from locations in those directions. There are no public locations or private dwellings within the ZPV to the south beyond the A438.
- 3.1.4 Views from the road frontage are largely restricted to the section running past the entrance to the Site and would be glimpsed. The existing view takes in the large workshop building. The road frontage itself would be largely unchanged due to the retention of the existing dwelling on the road frontage.
- 3.1.5 Potential visibility of the Proposed Development from locations to the east are limited to a section of the A438 (when travelling westwards only) for a distance of circa 120m and to the property at Kemeys and, potentially, oblique views from upper floor window locations at

adjacent properties.

- 3.1.6 Potential visibility of the Proposed Development from locations to the west is restricted to close range locations from private residences on or near the boundary. These properties have varying existing views into the existing site, depending on the specific locations relative to trees controlled by the Applicant within the Site. Woodland and orchard vegetation to the southwest also severely limits potential visibility from locations in this direction.
- 3.1.7 Views from the north are very restricted by the existing boundary vegetation (to be retained), the church building beyond and boundary woodland to the landfill. No views of the Proposed Development will be possible from the church or churchyard.
- 3.1.8 Potential visibility of the Proposed Development from locations to the north-northeast and northeast is more likely from these areas due to the more open landscape present here. Views from the A4103 (heading southwards only) may be possible over the field / roadside boundary hedgerow depending on the cut height of the hedge and the height of the road users (e.g. car or bus).
- 3.1.9 Visibility from a small number of properties with unimpeded south-facing aspects at Sutton Sugwas may be possible from a medium-range distance of 500m plus. Garden vegetation (trees and hedgerows) will interrupt a number of potential views towards the Site. The Stretton Sugwas Academy school and playing fields on the southeastern corner of the village are unlikely to provide viewpoints of the Proposed Development, due to interlying vegetation.
- 3.1.10 Partial views to the Site may be possible from Sunny View Bungalow circa 450m to the west-northwest, but this private location could not be assessed as part of the fieldwork.

3.2 METHOD OF ASSESSMENT OF VISUAL EFFECTS

3.2.1 The assessment of visual effects uses professional judgement to ascertain levels of importance of effect through levels of contribution of sensitivity of the viewer, magnitude of effects and nature of effect (i.e. whether it is positive, negative or neutral).

Table 1 *Magnitude of Visual Effects Criteria*

Magnitude of Visual Effect	Visual Criteria
Very Large	Where the proposals become the only dominant feature in the view and to which all other elements become subordinate. Typically involves direct views at close range over a wide horizontal and vertical extent.
Large	Where the proposals would form a significant and immediately apparent element of the scene and would affect the overall impression of the view. Typically involves direct or oblique views at close range with notable changes over the horizontal and vertical extent.
Medium	Where proposals would form a visible and recognisable new development but where it is not intrusive within the overall view. Typically involves direct or oblique views at medium range with a moderate horizontal and/or vertical extent of the view affected.
Small	Where proposals constitute only a minor component of the wider view, which the casual observer could miss or where awareness does not affect the overall quality of the scene. Typically involves an oblique view at medium or long range or a direct view at long range with a small horizontal/vertical extent of the view affected.
Very Small	Where only a very small part of the development is discernible or that it is at such a distance that the effects are scarcely appreciated.

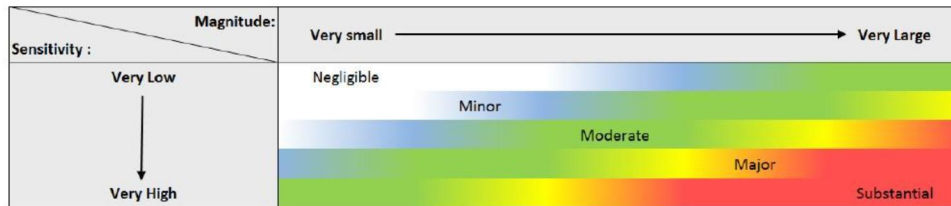
Table 2 *Sensitivity of Viewer Criteria*

Visual Sensitivity	Visual Criteria
Very High	Nationally well recognised and advertised location for high visual amenity value Prominent location or vista with high visual amenity value that is recognised in published sources. Very high susceptibility to change as a very high level of attention focussed on the landscape and particular views.
High	Well-known area recognised regionally for high landscape value . Open areas of recognised public access where primary enjoyment is of the views of the landscape. High susceptibility to change as a high level of attention focused on the landscape and particular views.
Medium	Locations afford views of some value , but visual amenity not well recognised beyond locality. Moderate susceptibility to change as a moderate level of attention focussed on the landscape and particular views.
Low	Viewpoint context and location is of lesser value than similar views from nearby visual receptors that may be more accessible. Low susceptibility to change as low level of attention focussed on the landscape and particular views.
Very Low	Viewpoint context is such that views have a very low value . Expectations of visual amenity are very low. Activity at viewpoint is incidental to the view.

3.2.2 The derivation of levels of effect (indicating their importance) generally follows a pattern by which the relationship between sensitivity and magnitude contributes to the level of importance as shown in Diagram 5. This process is applied to a selection of representative viewpoints.

3.2.3 On balance, in overall planning terms, Important effects may not necessarily be considered unacceptable.

Diagram 5 Overall Level of Effect



3.3 ASSESSMENT OF VISUAL EFFECTS

3.3.1 A number of representative viewpoints have been selected to demonstrate the types of effects that are anticipated and that have been assessed as part of the Proposed Development. These are from the following locations and are assessed and illustrated on subsequent pages:

Photo 1 - The road frontage near the entrance to the Site;

Photo 2 - Circa 70m east of the Site on the A438, near the dwelling named Kemeys;

Photo 3 - Circa 230m north of the Site on the A4103;

Photo 4 – Circa 550m north-northeast on the edge of Sutton Sugwas;

Photo 5 – Circa 630m northeast, within Sutton Sugwas.

Photolocation 1

3.3.2 Photo 1 shows the existing Site entrance, including stored materials and workshop building, together with the roadside dwelling to be retained. The change in view would be replacement of the workshop building with a smaller 'design barn' and green open space. Partial views of upper parts of new dwellings may be visible, as would a slight reduction

in apparent tree cover.

3.3.3 The sensitivity of the visual receptor is Low (road users) and the magnitude of effect would be Small to Medium. The effect would have some positive and some adverse effects that overall would be considered to be of Minor importance.

Photolocation 2

3.3.4 Photo 2 shows the view of westbound users of the A438 highway and adjacent pavement (Low sensitivity). It is also partially representative of views from the dwelling called Kemeys (Medium-High sensitivity). The existing view of the Site takes in a combination of arable land, hedgerows, tree cover and the large roof of the on-site workshop. The vast majority of the Site is screened from view by the boundary hedgerow. St. Mary Magdalene's Church tower is just visible above and through the vegetation.

3.3.5 Changes in the view would be largely related to the replacement of the view of the workshop roof with partial views (of lesser extent) of the new smaller buildings in the vicinity of the existing workshop. There would be an apparent slight reduction in apparent tree cover, until garden planting and landscaping establishes. The effects would be largely neutral and the magnitude of change would be Small. Overall, the visual effects would be considered to be of Minor importance.

Photolocation 3

3.3.6 Photo 3 shows the view southbound along the A4103 over a clipped roadside hedge towards the Site. The existing view takes in St. Mary Magdalene's Church and churchyard (which forms a focal point in the view), arable fields, hedgerows trees and the highway itself. The Site is

largely almost totally hidden from view Visual receptors would be highways users (Low sensitivity) and views would be transient.

- 3.3.7 Providing the hedgerow vegetation at the boundary of the Site is retained, the new buildings would be virtually totally screened from view. The highest part of the new buildings may be partially visible through the tops of the hedgerow vegetation and in winter the buildings may also be partially visible through the leafless hedge, as would be the case now. Any apparent reduction in tree cover would not be noticeable from this viewpoint. The view and visual setting of the church and churchyard would remain largely unchanged. Overall, the magnitude of adverse effect would be Small and the visual effects would be considered to be of Negligible - Minor importance.

Photolocation 4

- 3.3.8 Photo 4 shows the view from the edge of Sutton Sugwas where there are a small number of houses facing towards the Site, a highway (A4103) and nearby is footpath SS6. There are no views from the actual footpath itself. The existing view takes in St. Mary Magdalene's Church and churchyard (which again forms a focal point in the view), arable fields, hedgerows trees, the on site workshop building and modern, large agricultural buildings present at Sugwas Farm (on the skyline, in-line with the Site). The view is more panoramic than from Photolocation 3 and the Site forms a smaller component of the view, with the viewpoint being further away.
- 3.3.9 Visual receptors at dwellings and people accessing the public footpath would be of Medium sensitivity and highways users would be of Low sensitivity.
- 3.3.10 Due to the retention (and supplementation, where gaps occur) of the boundary hedgerow, the vast majority of the Proposed Development

will be hidden from view. Changes in the view would be largely related to the replacement of the view of the workshop roof with partial views (of lesser extent) of the new smaller buildings in the vicinity of the existing workshop and partial views through/over the boundary vegetation. There is unlikely to be a discernible change in tree cover. The view and visual setting of the church and churchyard would remain largely unchanged. The effects would be largely neutral and the magnitude of change would be Very Small. Overall, the visual effects would be considered to be of Negligible - Minor importance.

Photolocation 5

- 3.3.11 Photo 5 shows the view from Sutton Sugwas, where visual receptors include users of residential dwellings (Medium sensitivity), highways users (Low sensitivity) and a small area of a public house garden (Medium sensitivity). The viewpoint is further away from the Site again and the Site forms a small component of the view. The existing view again takes in St. Mary Magdalene's Church and churchyard, arable fields, hedgerows trees, the on-site workshop building (more prominent than in Photo 4) and overhead powerlines. The modern, large agricultural buildings present at Sugwas Farm are prominently positioned on the skyline, in-line with the southern part of the Site. The majority of the Site is hidden from view by the boundary vegetation. The view towards the site is more interrupted than the open views
- 3.3.12 The comments made in relation to likely changes in the view for Photolocation 4 also apply here. The effects would be largely neutral and the magnitude of change would be Very Small. Overall, the visual effects would be considered to be of Negligible - Minor importance.

Photo 1:



Photo2:



Photo 3:

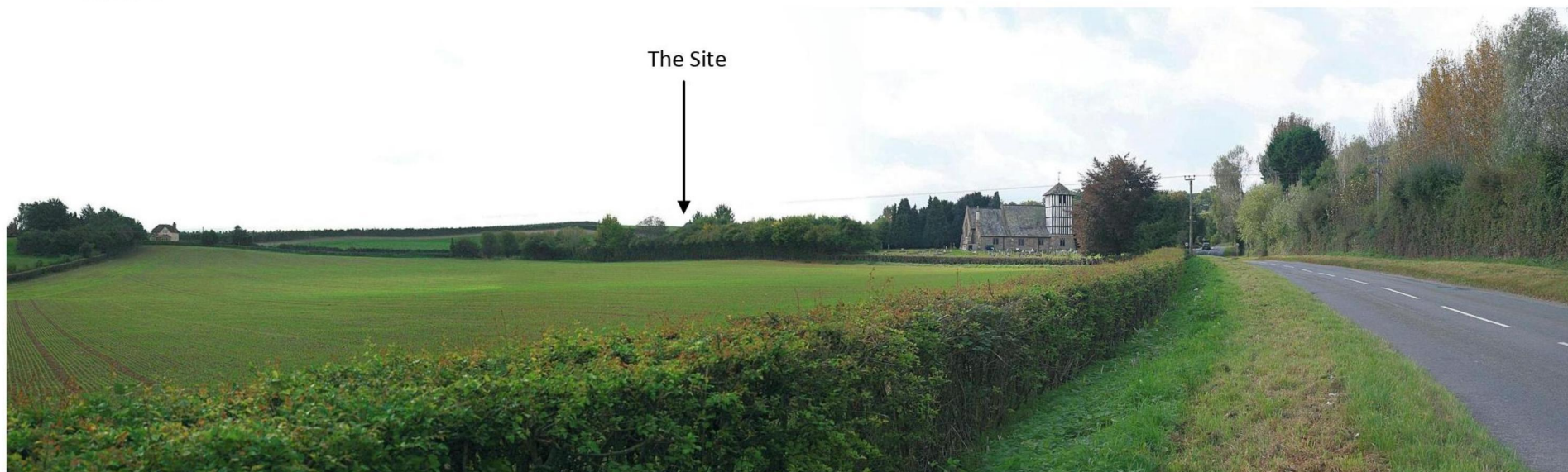


Photo 4:



Photo 5:



Other Viewpoints

- 3.3.13 Views from private residences located to the immediate west of the Site are likely from specific locations (upper floor windows), and many may already have views into the Site (including into storage areas etc.) where there are no interlying trees. The existing visual amenity afforded from these private locations likely to be variable. Some effects are likely to be considered adverse in nature and others neutral (and possibly positive). These viewpoints would be considered to be of Medium sensitivity. The magnitude of effects are likely to be Medium-High. The level of importance of the visual effects would be considered to be Moderate.

3.4 METHOD OF ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

- 3.4.1 Landscape Sensitivity is determined by the combination of landscape susceptibility (i.e. the inherent ability of a defined landscape receptor (e.g. landscape characteristics) to accommodate the specific Proposed Development without undue negative consequences) and landscape value.
- 3.4.2 Landscape value is the desirability of landscape characteristics (including scenic beauty, tranquillity, wildness, cultural associations, conservation interests etc.) and the acceptability of their loss to different stakeholders (i.e. valued for different reasons by different people and on different scales, e.g. local, national).

3.4.3 The level of landscape sensitivity is derived generally following the pattern shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Landscape Sensitivity

Land. Susceptibility \ Land. Value	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
Very Low	Very Low	Very Low	Low	Low or Medium	Medium
Low	Very Low	Low	Low or Medium	Medium	Medium or High
Medium	Low	Low or Medium	Medium	Medium or High	High
High	Low or Medium	Medium	Medium or High	High	Very High
Very High	Medium	Medium or High	High	Very High	Very High

3.4.4 The determination of magnitude of landscape effect is guided by Table 4.

Table 4 Magnitude of Landscape Effect

Magnitude of Landscape Effect	Landscape Criteria
Very Large	Typically, large scale changes and/or numerous changes to important landscape characteristics
Large	Typically, large scale changes to some landscape characteristics, or a high number of medium scale changes to the landscape characteristics
Medium	Typically, some medium scale changes to some landscape characteristics
Small	Typically, a low number of medium scale changes to landscape characteristics, or a number of small scale changes to landscape characteristics
Very Small	Typically, occasional, small scale changes to unimportant landscape characteristics

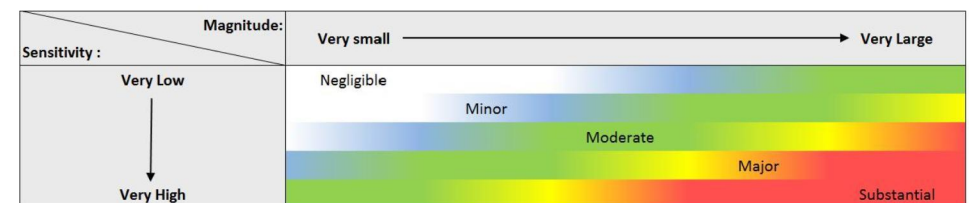
3.4.5 The effects on the landscape can apply at an individual level (e.g. to specific landscape elements or characteristics) and at the landscape character level. Both aspects are considered below.

3.4.6 Important changes to landscape character occur when the relative level of contribution of the existing key characteristics changes (either through reduction/increase or removal/addition) such that the landscape would be defined or classified differently at a given geographical scale.

3.4.7 For this Proposed Development and site, potential effects on landscape character would be limited to a maximum of 750m from the Site.

3.4.8 The derivation of levels of importance of effect generally follows a pattern by which the relationship between sensitivity and magnitude contributes to the level of effect as shown in Diagram 6. Major or Substantial levels of effect would be considered to be Important. On balance, in overall planning terms, Important effects may not necessarily be considered unacceptable.

Diagram 6 Overall Level of Effect



3.5 ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

Effects on Landscape Characteristics

- 3.5.1 The landscape elements present within the Site consist of a combination of maturing (but relative young) trees, grassed areas and areas of hardstanding, buildings and bare ground. The existing buildings comprise of a dwelling, a stone and timber-panelled outbuilding, a large timber workshop building and a number of small shipping container converted buildings. Large areas are used for storage of building materials (timber etc.) and there were a number of cars parked on site at the time of the fieldwork. The Site boundaries are a combination of hedgerows and trees, with some fencing and brick walls also present.
- 3.5.2 The more valued elements largely relate to those present at the boundaries (e.g. hedgerows and hedgerow trees, existing dwelling and stone building) which will be retained. The remaining elements are of low value in the landscape and would not be susceptible to change in their own right. The addition of new buildings (dwellings) would be (subject to detailed design) in keeping with adjacent existing dwellings.
- 3.5.3 Overall the landscape sensitivity of the landscape elements to the Proposed Development is Low-Medium. The magnitude of change would be Small and the overall nature of effect would neutral. The importance of the effect on landscape elements is considered to be Minor.

Effects on Landscape Character

- 3.5.4 The key characteristics of the local landscape character are listed as:

Primary:

- Hedgerows define field boundaries;
- Ancient wooded character portrayed by the hedgerow trees and woodland;
- Densely scattered hedgerow trees, predominantly of oak; and
- Filtered views between the hedgerow oaks.

Secondary:

- Organic enclosure pattern; and
- Small-scale landscapes.

- 3.5.5 The landscape sensitivity to the Proposed Development is considered to be Medium. The landscape is susceptible to certain levels of new residential development (actual and apparent) where the density, layout, style and quantity would elevate its contribution such that it would become a key characteristic. The Site's contribution of trees, hedgerows and small-scale nature are valued; the remaining characteristics would be of lower landscape value.
- 3.5.6 The Proposed Development would allow the retention of the pattern of the parcel of land as existing (not disrupting the existing wider pattern), would allow the retention (and supplementation) of hedgerows and a number of trees within the Site. Filtered views would remain.

3.5.7 The Primary and Secondary key characteristics of the landscape character area would not reduce. A number of detracting characteristics would be replaced via the addition of the new elements (dwellings, landscaping and shared surface access). The pattern, layout and density of the proposed residential development (in outline) are such that it would reflect the existing adjacent residential character and create a neutral-adverse effect of Small magnitude.

3.5.8 The level of the effect on the landscape character is Minor-Moderate. The key characteristics would remain unchanged such that the effects of the Proposed Development on the landscape character would not be considered Important.

4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 CONCLUSIONS

4.1.1 There are no overriding reasons relating to landscape or visual effects why the Proposed Development should not be approved. The Proposed Development would not have an unacceptable adverse effect upon the landscape setting of adjacent settlements and important visual approaches into settlements, views of key buildings (St. Mary Magdalene's Church), open areas into development, green corridors, ridgelines and surrounding open countryside will be remain.

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.2.1 It is recommended that a suitable condition be put in place to agree the detailing of the peripheral and internal landscaping, and management of these features, to maximise opportunities to retain and establish characteristic and native planting and allow the integration of these and the Proposed Development into the immediate landscape as effectively

and as positively as possible.

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