

**Land at Townsend Farm, East Street,  
Pembroke**

**LANDSCAPE & VISUAL APPRAISAL**



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<b>Our Ref:</b>	19110 / EH / LVA001
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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 This Landscape Appraisal has been undertaken by Bea Landscape Design Ltd on behalf of Mr & Mrs G Smith in support of the outline planning application for the land at Townsend Farm, East Street, Pembridge ('the Site') as identified on Figure 01. Contextual Plan. The Site lies to the East of the village of Pembridge on Townsend Farm, the North of the Townsend Touring Park.
- 1.1.2 Government guidance draws attention to the protection of the landscape character and quality, placing an increasing pressure on local regulatory authorities to take the issues into account in all decision making that concerns the wider landscape. To that effect this report has been commissioned to demonstrate to the local authority that it is possible to allow development within the Site without detrimental visual effect whilst both maintaining the character and quality of the surrounding area.
- 1.1.3 The Site lies within the control of Herefordshire Council within the Parish of Pembridge.
- 1.1.4 The survey and fieldwork were carried out in November 2019 when the surrounding trees and hedgerows have lost the majority of their leaves showing the potentially worst - case views.

### 1.2 Description of the Development

- 1.2.1 The entire Site is approximately 2.07 hectares and has been designed to accommodate the construction of up to 22 dwellings with the formation of an access off East Street and from Townsend Farm with associated garages, car parking and landscaping (refer to Figure 06, Planning Layout).

## 2.0 LANDSCAPE POLICY

### 2.1 National Planning Policy

- 2.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework 2018 (NPPF), must be taken into account in the determination of planning applications. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied through its core planning principles.
- 2.1.2 With regard to the environment, paragraph 8c states that the Planning System should "*contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy*". Paragraph 127 states that "*Planning policies and 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).*"
- 2.1.3 The National Planning Policy Framework is accompanied by a suite of planning practice guidance available at [www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance), which provides advice on many aspects of the planning process. Sections particularly relevant to this report include:

- Natural environment; landscape

- 2.1.4 The landscape section refers to the principle that planning should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. And suggests local plans should have policies for the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, including landscapes, both designated and the wider countryside. The guidance refers to the use of landscape character assessment at a national and local level as a tool to help inform, plan and manage change.
- 2.1.5 The guidance suggests that in identifying impacts on landscape, considerations include: direct and indirect effects, cumulative impacts and temporary and permanent impacts. When assessing the significance of impacts a number of criteria should be considered including the sensitivity of the landscape and visual resource and the magnitude or size of the predicted change. It also suggests that some landscapes may be more sensitive to certain types of change than others and it should not be assumed that a landscape character area deemed sensitive to one type of change cannot accommodate another type of change.
- 2.1.6 In assessing the impact on visual amenity, the guidance suggests that factors to consider include: establishing the area in which a proposed development may be visible, identifying key viewpoints, the people who experience the views and the nature of the views.

## 2.2 Local Planning Policy: The Herefordshire Local Plan 2011-2031

- 2.2.1 The 'Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy' was formally adopted on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2015 and replaces the core policies of the 2007 Unitary Development Plan. Core strategy policies relevant to this appraisal include LD1 – Landscape and townscape and LD4 Historic environment and heritage assets.
- 2.2.2 The Site is included within the Herefordshire Local Plan, Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2012) as assessed land HLAA 204001. This is noted as 'Land with No Potential during the Plan Period' and was listed as a rejected site due to the site being an *'important approach to the village and within the Conservation Area. Difficult to integrate satisfactorily given the sporadic and scattered nature of development locally.'*
- 2.2.3 The Site is partly located within the Pembridge Conservation area as described within the draft Pembridge Conservation Area Appraisal issued in 2007 and the adopted Pembridge Neighbourhood Development Plan.

## 2.3 Neighbourhood Planning Policy: Pembridge Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2031

- 2.3.1 The 'Pembridge Neighbourhood Development Plan' (PNDP) was adopted in March 2019 to form part of the 'Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy'. The site is identified as vi) Land of approximately 2.00 hectares at Townsend within the PNDP Policy PEM4: 'Housing Sites in Pembridge' *'where new housing development may take place, provided they meet the requirements set out in the relevant design and detailed policies within this plan.'*

- 2.3.2 The policy goes on to state that: *'The potential of this land was reviewed through this NDP process and it has been concluded that a low-density scheme behind a strong landscaped screen would be suitable. Proposals should provide a range of house sizes in terms of 2, 3 and 4 bedroomed properties. A phased approach enabling self-build and custom-build houses would also be encouraged on this site.'*

*A high standard of design and landscaping is required for this site. As with the development of land at The Gables, the primary concern is the visual effect upon the entrance to the village, not only in relation to the proposed housing but also the access arrangements. A comprehensive yet attractive access arrangement is required to serve the site, the existing caravan/farm shop and possibly land at The Gables.'*

- 2.3.3 The PNDP policies relevant to this appraisal include PEM 4: Housing Sites in Pembridge Village, PEM 6: Design Criteria for Residential Development, PEM 18: Retaining the Natural Environment and Landscape, PEM 19: Protecting Heritage Assets, PEM 20: Development within Pembridge Conservation Area.

### 3.0 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 This report aims to assess the effects of the proposal on the landscape and visual resource of the area. The assessment has involved the following key stages:
- Desk based research to determine the scope of the study;
  - Preparation of the zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV);
  - Desk-based research to establish the landscape and visual baseline and identify potential receptors;
  - Field work to verify the ZTV and baseline studies and ascertain how the landscape and visual resource will change; and
  - Assessment and reporting of potential effects.
- 3.1.2 The process is supported by the use of viewpoints to illustrate and evaluate effects at key or representative locations relevant to the proposal, but the assessment of effects is not confined just to these key viewpoints.
- 3.1.3 The report also includes a review of planning and other policy relevant to landscape and visual considerations in the area, which has helped inform the scope of the study and the assessments.
- 3.1.4 The report and the appraisal has been carried out in accordance with 'Guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition 2013, a joint publication by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and the Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland, published by the Countryside Agency; 2002.
- 3.1.5 GLVIA3 recognises that professional judgement is an important concept within LVIA. Whilst there is scope for quantitative measurements of some factors, in many situations the assessment must rely on qualitative judgements that are based on reasoned and informed justifications.

- 3.1.6 This report is a standalone document and in consultation with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) is not required to form part of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). In accordance with the above guidance this reduces the overall scope of the document and does not necessarily require the determination of the 'significance of effects' that might be identified within the assessment.
- 3.1.7 In order to determine the scale of effects, two key aspects should be established. These are the nature of the landscape or visual receptor likely to be affected, often referred to as its sensitivity and the nature of the effect likely to occur, which is often referred to as the magnitude of the likely change. The combination of these two results in a judgement of the scale of the effect. Consideration of the scale of the effect then enables a judgement to be made as to whether the effect is significant (if required for a formal EIA) or notable (for non EIA developments).

## 3.2 Landscape effects

*'An assessment of landscape effects deals with the effects of change and development on landscape as a resource'.*

### Landscape Baseline

- 3.2.1 The establishment of the landscape baseline commences with a desktop study to collate and review the existing information and published material about the Site and its surroundings including; statutory and non-statutory landscape designations, landscape character, landscape fabric such as soils, land use, cultural heritage and protected landscape features including trees, hedgerows or buildings and other professional evaluations or studies on the landscape. This information is used to determine the scope of the assessment and the extent of the study area and field survey work.
- 3.2.2 The field survey is carried out using a standard landscape character assessment pro-forma tailored from the findings of the desk top study and initial Site visits to identify and record the landscape elements, key characteristics, aesthetic qualities and perceptions that contribute to the landscape resource.
- 3.2.3 The condition and value of the landscape is identified using the criteria as set out in Table 1. The categories are not exhaustive and the final classification takes into account the location and relative condition of adjacent areas. The applicability of the criteria has been based on professional judgement.

Table 1: Landscape Value	
Quality Category	Assessment Criteria
High - exceptional	Strong landscape structure, characteristics, patterns, balances combination of landform and land cover. Appropriate management. Distinct features worthy of conservation. No detracting features. I.e. World Heritage Site, National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
High	Strong landscape structure, characteristic patterns, balances combination of landform and land cover. Appropriate management with scope to improve. Distinct features worthy of conservation. Occasional detracting features. I.e. parts of National Park or AONB and majority of Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV).



Good	Recognisable landscape structure, characteristic patterns, and combinations of landform and land cover still evident. Scope to improve management. Some features worthy of conservation, some detracting features. I.e. localised areas within National Park of AONB, AGLV. Locally recognised area of local landscape importance.
Ordinary	Distinguishable landscape structure, characteristic patterns of landform and land cover often masked by land use. Scope to improve management of vegetation, some features worthy of conservation, some detracting features.
Poor	Weak landscape structure, characteristic patterns of landform and land cover often masked by land use, mixed land use evident, lack of management and intervention has resulted in degradation, frequent detracting features.
Very Poor	Degraded landscape structure, characteristic patterns of landform and land cover are masked by land use, mixed land use dominates, and lack of management / intervention has resulted in degradation, extensive detracting features.
Damaged Landscape	Damaged landscape structure, single land use dominates, disturbed or derelict land requires treatment, and detracting features dominate.

### Prediction of Landscape Effects

- 3.2.4 The next stage is to determine the sensitivity of the landscape receptors to the type and scale of development proposed. In order to do this, the susceptibility and value of the receptor are considered, although within the assessment these may not always be explicitly noted. In many cases, it is considered sufficient to describe only the sensitivity, which is informed by an overall professional judgement.
- 3.2.5 **Susceptibility** is the "ability of the landscape receptor to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline and/or the achievement of planning policies and strategies". (GLVIA3). Where noted, susceptibility is described as follows:
- *High:* where undue negative consequences are expected to arise from the proposal.
  - *Medium:* where undue negative consequences may arise from the proposal.
  - *Low:* where undue negative consequences are unlikely to arise from the proposal.
- 3.2.6 Susceptibility may be informed by existing Landscape Character Assessments, which often note sensitivity. However, this is frequently 'intrinsic' or 'inherent' sensitivity, which may not directly relate to the type of development proposed. In such cases, a judgement must be made as to how this sensitivity might relate to the development in question.

3.2.7 **Sensitivity** combines the judgements made for susceptibility and landscape value, as described above. Three levels of sensitivity are recorded:

- *High sensitivity :* A landscape receptor of high value with a particularly distinctive characteristic that is susceptible to relatively small changes of the type proposed;
- *Medium sensitivity:* A landscape receptor of valued characteristics reasonably tolerant of change of the type proposed.
- *Low sensitivity:* A landscape receptor of relatively low value or importance which is potentially tolerant of substantial change of the type proposed.

3.2.8 Within the assessment, an overall judgment of sensitivity is only provided where this is considered sufficient to allow an informed assessment on the receptor.

#### **Magnitude of landscape change**

3.2.9 Effects on landscape receptors are assessed in terms of their magnitude of change. This is a combination of the size or scale, geographic extent of the area influenced and the duration and reversibility of the impact. Within the assessment, size and scale or extent may not always be noted. In many cases, it is considered sufficient to describe only the magnitude of change, which is informed by an overall professional judgement.

3.2.10 Size and scale concerns the amount of existing landscape elements that will be lost, the extent to which these represent or contribute to the character of the landscape. It also relates to the degree to which aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape are altered through removal or addition of new features, such as hedge loss or introduction of tall features on skylines. Size and scale, where noted, may be rated as follows:

- *Large:* Major change to the existing landscape including key elements, characteristics and qualities.
- *Medium:* Partial or noticeable change to key elements, characteristics and qualities
- *Small:* Some discernible but largely minor change to key elements, characteristics and qualities
- *Negligible:* Very minor or virtually imperceptible change to key elements, characteristics and qualities.

3.2.11 The geographical extent over which landscape effects are felt is distinct from the size or scale. For example, large scale effects may be limited to the immediate Site area. Again, extent is subject to a degree of professional judgement, but where noted these may be rated as follows:

- *Wide:* influencing several landscape types or areas, beyond around 5km
- *Medium:* generally within the local character area or up between 1-5km
- *Local:* the Site and immediate surrounds, up to around 0.75 to 1km
- *Site:* within around 0.75km of the Site.

3.2.12 The duration of the effect relates to the time period during which the changes to the landscape will occur. This is rated as follows:

- *Long term:* beyond 10 years
- *Medium term:* 2 to 10 years
- *Short term:* up to 10 years

3.2.13 The magnitude of change is a product of the size/scale, extent and duration of the impacts. This is judged as a four-point scale (See table 2):

<b>Table 2: Magnitude of Landscape Change</b>	
<b>Magnitude of change</b>	<b>Assessment Criteria</b>
High	Notable and long term change in landscape characteristics over an extensive area ranging to a very intensive, long term change over a more limited area
Medium	Moderate, short term change over a large area or moderate long term change in localised area;
Low	Slight long term or moderate short term change in landscape components; and
No Change	No discernible/virtually imperceptible change to the landscape's resources.

3.2.14 Within the assessment, size and scale or extent may not always be noted. In many cases, it is considered sufficient to describe only the magnitude of change, which is informed by an overall professional judgement.

### Quantifying landscape effects

3.2.15 The second step is to determine the scale of effects (see table 3). This is evaluated by combining the sensitivity (or nature) of the landscape receptor and the magnitude (or nature) of change. The following matrix provides an objective rationale for determining the scale of effects, in order to provide consistency and transparency to the process; however a degree of professional judgement is a key element of the evaluation.

Table 3: Scale of Proposed Effect				
		Sensitivity to change / nature of receptors		
		Low	Medium	High
<b>Magnitude of Change resulting from identified impacts. (Table 2)</b>	No Change/Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible - Slight
	Low	Slight	Slight - Moderate	Moderate
	Medium	Slight - Moderate	Moderate	Moderate - Substantial
	High	Moderate	Moderate - Substantial	Substantial

3.2.16 The scale indicates the importance of the effect, taking into account the sensitivity (or nature) of the receptor and the magnitude (or nature) of the effect. It is usually rated on the following scale of effects:

- *Substantial:* indicates an effect that is very important in the planning decision making process.
- *Moderate / Substantial:* indicates an effect that is, in itself, material in the planning decision making process.
- *Moderate:* indicates a noticeable effect that is not, in itself, material in the planning decision making process.
- *Slight:* indicates an effect that is trivial in the planning decision making process.
- *Negligible / No Change* indicates an effect that is akin to no change and is thus not relevant to the planning decision making process.

3.2.17 The scale of effects detailed above can be classed as beneficial, neutral or adverse.

### Classification of landscape effects

3.2.18 Beneficial landscape effects can occur when features or key landscape characteristics such as established hedgerows, mature trees or old buildings or structures which - when considered singularly or collectively - help to define the character of an area are retained and enhanced and or where new structures in keeping with the scale or character of the surroundings are introduced.

3.2.19 Adverse landscape effects occur when features or key landscape characteristics such as established hedgerows, mature trees or old buildings or structures which - when considered singularly or collectively - help to define the character of an area are lost, or where new structures are out of scale or character with the surroundings are introduced.

- *Substantial adverse:* landscape effects occur where the proposals are at considerable variance with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape and would be a dominant feature, resulting in considerable reduction in scenic quality and large scale change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area.
- *Moderate adverse:* landscape effects occur where proposals are out of scale with the landscape, or inconsistent with the local pattern and landform and may be locally dominant and/or result in a noticeable reduction in scenic quality and a degree of change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area;
- *Slight adverse:* landscape effects occur where the proposals do not quite fit with the scale, landform or local pattern of the landscape and may be locally intrusive but would result in a minor reduction in scenic quality or change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area.
- *Neutral* landscape effects arise when the change proposed results in no discernible improvement or deterioration to the landscape resource. The proposals sit well within the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape and / or would not result in any discernible reduction in scenic quality or change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area.
- *Slight beneficial:* landscape effects occur where derelict buildings, land or poorly maintained landscape features are repaired, replaced and maintained or where new features are introduced such as new tree planting which helps to define landscape structure where none currently exists. Beneficial landscape effects can be slight, moderate or substantial.

### Judging the overall importance of the effects

- 3.2.20 Effects may be described as significant in projects that are subject to EIA. However, as noted in Section 2.1.3, for non-EIA projects this term is replaced here with notable. Notable effects are defined as those that are moderate-substantial or substantial. However whilst an effect may be notable, it does not necessarily mean that such an effect would be unacceptable.
- 3.2.21 Account is taken of the effect that any mitigation measures for example planting or landform may have in terms of minimising potentially detrimental effects or improving the landscape composition of the area.

### Glossary

The assessment is necessarily technical in nature and therefore, a short overview of terminology used, is provided as follow based on the guidelines:

- *Landscape Resource:* The combination of elements that contribute to the landscape character.

- *Landscape Receptors:* The defined aspects of the landscape resource that have the potential to be affected by a proposal.
- *Landscape effects:* The effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right.

### 3.3 Visual effects

*'An assessment of visual effects deals with the effects of change and development on the view available to people and their visual amenity.'*

#### Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

- 3.3.1 The purpose of identifying the ZTV is to define the extent or zone within which the proposed development may be visible. The ZTV is the preferred term as it indicates those locations from which the proposed development may appear as a component of the view.
- 3.3.2 It provides a means of identifying potential receptors (areas of land used by the public and individual/groups of buildings) so that an assessment of effects on identified receptor locations can be undertaken. It also assists in the assessment of effects on different landscape character types and designated Sites as it indicates whether a view may be obtained in these areas.
- 3.3.3 The ZTV does not guarantee that a development will definitely be, or not be, visible from any given location, nor is it representative of the sensitivity to change, the magnitude of change or the significance of impact at any receptor location.
- 3.3.4 Computer-generated ZTVs are a widely used tool in visual impact assessments. It is common practice for ZTVs to be prepared using Digital Terrain Models (DTMs) which are a 'bare earth' representation of the topography of an area. DTMs do not account for the screening effect of buildings, vegetation and other such structures.
- 3.3.5 The Terrain model was based on 5m grid spot heights using 'OS Terrain 5' DTM height data derived from Ordnance Survey and was prepared using Key Terra Firma software, by placing structures of 9.0m high over the entire Site area of the proposed development. The ZTV was generated for receptors of a height of 1.65m, as recommended by the GLVIA3 guidance (see Figure 8).
- 3.3.6 This ZTV does not take into account any screening by any local or wider features other than those that are represented by the contours of the land and thus that is why further field studies are undertaken to examine what the effect of existing buildings, trees, hedgerows, woods and other existing features both natural and man-made will have of the possible view of the Site. This second stage ZTV true view based on a site assessment is represented as the 'visual envelope' (See Figure 9.Viewpoint & Visual Envelope).
- 3.3.7 It should be noted that this process relies on the resolution of the data used to generate it, and is therefore never 100% accurate; however, it does give a very useful illustration of potential visibility.

## Visual Baseline

3.3.8 In order to establish the visual baseline a desk top survey is undertaken accompanied by initial Site visits to determine the scope of the assessment, Site context including the 'Zone of Theoretical Visibility', the identification of the people who may be affected by the development proposals and identifying the views and viewpoints. Views identified nearest to the Site are assessed first to allow for a systematic review of the viability of the more distant viewpoints targeted during the desktop study. Due to the scale of the proposed development viewpoints representative of short (up to 0.2km), medium (0.2km – 1km) and long (over 1km) distances from the Site are selected for more detailed analysis, with specifically identified long distance views analysed where appropriate.

3.3.9 A viewpoint is a location from where a view of the proposal is gained; a number of viewpoints have been chosen in order to support the assessment of landscape and visual effects and illustrate effects at key locations: The viewpoints are carefully selected to be either:

- *Representative viewpoints:* those selected to represent the experience of different types of visual receptors, where large number of viewpoints cannot all be included individually and where significant effects are unlikely to differ. For example, viewpoints may be chosen to represent views of users of a number of footpaths or bridleways. Viewpoints may also be selected to reflect visual elements that inform the landscape resource.
- *Specific viewpoints:* important key viewpoints within the landscape. Examples of these may include local visitor attractions, settlements, routes valued for their scenic amenity, or places with cultural landscape associations.
- *Illustrative viewpoints:* those chosen specifically to demonstrate a particular effect or specific issues, e.g. restricted visibility at certain locations.

3.3.10 A range of views and viewers are represented through the choice of viewpoints. Factors which were considered in selecting the final viewpoints to be used for the assessment include:

- Landscape character type (separate and combinations of type)
- The presence of nationally designated landscapes and/or Areas of High Landscape Value within local planning policy, recreational routes, local amenity spaces
- Visual composition, for example focused or panoramic views, simple or complex landscape pattern, vistas or glimpses
- Distance from the proposed development (short, medium and long range views)
- Aspect and elevation
- Viewer type

- Activities of the receptors, for example those at home, work, travelling in various modes or carrying out recreation
- Modes of movement, for example those moving through the landscape or stationary
- Potential for cumulative views of the proposed development in conjunction with other developments

3.3.11 For this study a series of viewpoints have been identified to aid the assessment of effects. These have been developed into panoramic images to give a more realistic illustration of the visibility of the proposals and they have been illustrated to show the extent of the Site that is visible from that particular location.

3.3.12 For all the viewpoints, photographs were taken with a digital SLR camera with a full-frame sensor and fixed 50mm lens. A series of images suitable to stitch together to form a panoramic image were taken in accordance with the SNH guidance and the following information was recorded and is supplied:

- Precise location 12 figure OS grid reference.
- Viewpoint altitude in metres Above Ordnance Datum (m AOD) interpolated from DTM/OS mapping
- Viewing height in metres
- Distance to proposal
- Date of assessment
- Weather conditions and visual range.

3.3.13 The following information is described in the assessment

- Description of location (receptor)
- Description of nature of existing view and likely change during operation
- Description of magnitude of impact and sensitivity of visual receptors
- Summary of the significance of the potential impact
- Description of the cumulative impacts

#### **Predication of Visual Effects**

3.3.14 Visual receptors are people that experience the view. Development can change people's direct experience and perception of the view depending on existing context, the scale, form, colour and texture of the proposals, the nature of the activity associated with the development, and the distance and angle of view. Visual effects can be experienced through development intruding into existing views experienced by residents and day to day users of the area, and the views of tourists and visitors passing through or visiting the area.

3.3.15 The likely effects of the proposed development on the potential visual receptors are assessed from the selected representative views or viewpoints based on the field survey data with consideration of each identified effect, an assessment of the nature of the visual receptor and the nature of the effect on the views and visual amenity.

3.3.16 The next stage is to determine the sensitivity of the visual receptors to the type and scale of development proposed. In order to do this, the susceptibility and value of the receptor are considered, although within the assessment these may not always be explicitly noted. In many cases, it is considered sufficient to describe only the sensitivity, which is informed by an overall professional judgement.



- 3.3.17 Visual receptor susceptibility is a function of receptor type, location and activity. In assessing visual receptor susceptibility, factors such as the following have been accounted for with a degree of professional judgement (see table 4):

<b>Table 4: Visual Receptor Sensitivity</b>		
<b>Sensitivity</b>	<b>Receptor</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
High - Medium	Residential (primary)	Principle (ground floor) views from residential properties, generally stationary receptors experienced throughout the year and at most times of the day. Reduced to medium sensitivity where ground floor views are oblique, filtered or from a long distance.
Medium	Residential (secondary)	Secondary views (often from first floor windows) from residential properties, generally stationary receptors experienced throughout the year and at fewer times of the day.
High	National Routes or recognised viewpoints.	Visitors to promoted or valued viewpoints especially those with vantage point/ panoramic views; viewpoints noted within planning guidance or policy; although transient, noted as nationally important recreational routes or National Routes with views in highly valued landscapes.
Medium	Public Rights of Way (PRoW)	Transient receptors but which are often repeat users; however views are experienced for only relatively short periods of time.
High-Medium	Community Facilities or Visitor attractions (Inc. Heritage Assets)	Public Static receptors with multiple occupants but which are mobile or temporary. Higher sensitivity noted for Heritage Assets where public views are considered an important contributor to the experience.
Low	Commercial	Static receptors with multiple occupants but which are mobile or temporary and are restricted to working hours.
Low	Industrial	Static receptors with multiple occupants but which views are inward rather than external.
Low	Motorists/ Pavement	Very mobile receptors where views are comparatively short in duration and fleeting.

#### Visual receptor magnitude of change.

- 3.3.18 The assessment of the magnitude of change on visual receptors follows similar principles to landscape assessment in terms of size or scale, the geographic extent of the area influenced and its duration and reversibility. Within the assessment, size and scale or extent may not always be noted. In many cases, it is considered sufficient to describe only the magnitude of change, which is informed by an overall professional judgement.
- 3.3.19 Size and scale concerns the relative change in the elements, features, qualities and characteristics that make up the view. Size and scale, where noted, are rated as follows:

- *Large:* major change to the existing view including key elements, characteristics and qualities
- *Medium:* partial or noticeable change to elements, characteristics and qualities within the view
- *Small:* some discernible but largely minor change to key elements, characteristics and qualities within the view
- *Negligible:* very minor or virtually imperceptible change to key elements, characteristics and qualities such that the view essentially remains unchanged.

3.3.20 Where specifically noted, the geographical extent over which visual effects is described as follows:

- *Wide:* influencing most of a view or receptor (over half)
- *Medium:* generally between one quarter or one half of a view or receptor
- *Small:* generally less than one quarter of a view or receptor
- *Limited:* generally affecting only a small part of the receptor

3.3.21 The duration of the effect relates to the time period during which the changes to the landscape will occur. This is rated as follows:

- *Long term:* beyond 10 years
- *Medium term:* 2 to 10 years
- *Short term:* up to 2 years

### Magnitude of change

3.3.23 The magnitude of change is a product of the size/scale, extent and duration of the impacts. These are judged as a four-point scale (see table 5):

Table 5: Magnitude of Visual Change	
Magnitude of change	Assessment Criteria
High	where the development causes a very notable (or significant) change in the existing view for a sensitive receptor
Medium	where the development would cause a very noticeable change in the existing view
Low	where the development would cause a noticeable change in the existing view
No Change/ Negligible	where the development would cause a barely perceptible change in the existing view

## Quantifying visual effects

- 3.3.24 The second step is to determine the scale of effects (see table 6). This is evaluated by combining the sensitivity (or nature) of the visual receptor and the magnitude (or nature) of change. The following matrix provides an objective rationale for determining the scale of effects, in order to provide consistency and transparency to the process; however a degree of professional judgement is a key element of the evaluation.

Table 6: Scale of Proposed Effect				
		Sensitivity to change / nature of receptors (Table 4)		
		Low	Medium	High
<b>Magnitude of Change resulting from identified impacts. (Table 5)</b>	No Change/Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible - Slight
	Low	Slight	Slight - Moderate	Moderate
	Medium	Slight - Moderate	Moderate	Moderate - Substantial
	High	Moderate	Moderate - Substantial	Substantial

- 3.3.25 The scale of effects detailed above can be classed as beneficial, neutral or adverse.

## Classification of Visual Effects

- 3.3.26 Adverse visual effects occur when the proposed development will introduce new, non-characteristic, discordant or intrusive element/s into views.

- *Substantial adverse:* visual effects occur where the proposed development would cause a considerable deterioration in the existing view or visual amenity.
- *Moderate adverse:* visual effects occur where the proposed development would cause a noticeable deterioration in the existing view or visual amenity
- *Slight adverse:* visual effects occur where the proposed development would cause a barely perceptible deterioration in the existing view or visual amenity.
- *Neutral* visual effects occur where the change proposed results in no discernible improvement or deterioration to views or visual amenity.
- *Slight beneficial:* visual effects occur when the proposed development would enhance the quality of the receptor's view e.g. by creating a new focal point in a degraded landscape that includes a range of existing detractors. Beneficial visual effects can be slight, moderate or substantial.

- 3.3.27 Although public perception of residential developments is diverse, the worst case evaluation is used in this assessment. As such, effects are assumed to be adverse except where stated.
- 3.3.28 The scale indicates the importance of the effect, taking into account the sensitivity (or nature) of the receptor and the magnitude (or nature) of the effect. It is usually rated on the following scale of effects:
- *Substantial:* indicates an effect that is very important in the planning decision making process.
  - *Moderate / Substantial:* indicates an effect that is, in itself, material in the planning decision making process.
  - *Moderate:* indicates a noticeable effect that is not, in itself, material in the planning decision making process.
  - *Slight:* indicates an effect that is trivial in the planning decision making process.
  - *Negligible / No Change* indicates an effect that is akin to no change and is thus not relevant to the planning decision making process.

#### Judging the overall importance of the effects

- 3.3.29 Effects may be described as significant in projects that are subject to EIA. However, as noted in Section 2.1.3, for non-EIA projects this term is replaced here with notable. Notable effects are defined as those that are moderate-substantial or substantial. However whilst an effect may be notable, it does not necessarily mean that such an effect would be unacceptable.
- 3.3.30 Account is taken of the effect that any mitigation measures for example planting or landform may have in terms of minimising potentially detrimental effects or improving the landscape composition of the area.

#### Visual glossary

The assessment is necessarily technical in nature and therefore, a short overview of terminology used, is provided as follow based on the guidelines:

- *Visual Amenity:* The overall pleasantness of the views people enjoy of their surroundings, which provides an attractive visual setting or backdrop for the enjoyment of activities of the people living, working, recreating, visiting or travelling through an area.
- *Visual Receptors:* Individuals and / or defined groups of people who have the potential to be affected by a proposal.
- *Zone of Theoretical Visibility:* A computer generated zone within which a development is theoretically visible based on landform only (excluding existing buildings, woodlands, other obstacles).

- *Visual Envelope:* The visual envelope from which the development is theoretically visible taking into account trees, woodland, hedges and built structures.
- *Visual Effects:* The effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people.

## **LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT**

## 4.0 ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

- 4.0.1 The following section provides a summary of the baseline or current condition of the Site and surrounding area informed by the desktop and field surveys against which the landscape effects of the development proposals is to be assessed.

### 4.1 Baseline Conditions

#### Land Use

- 4.1.1 The land use of the Site is related to its geology, topography, and settlement history. Lying on the Southeastern edge of the settlement of Pembridge (refer to Figure 1 Context Plan & Figure 2 Location Plan), the Site is divided into three fields currently used for open pasture and partly bordered by mixed native hedgerows. The site surrounds the Telephone Exchange and the residential property Appleby with the Townsend Touring & Camping Park to the South. The residential properties to the Eastern edge of Pembridge lie to the West of the site including The Granary, The Stables and The Gables with Mere Court, Oak Cottage, Eastview and the Clover Meadow development of two residential properties to the North on the opposite side of East Street.
- 4.1.2 The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) for the Site, appears from the ALC Maps for the West Midlands as Grade 2 which is cited as being 'Very Good' agricultural land identified within the ecology survey as improved pasture. No public rights of way, bridle ways or roads cross the Site, with an existing farm access to the West, North and Eastern boundaries.
- 4.1.3 The existing land use of the site is considered to be of medium susceptibility and sensitivity.

#### Topography

- 4.1.4 The topography of the Site is undulating, sloping down from the Southwestern boundary at approximately 112m AOD and the Northeast boundary at approximately 110m AOD to the low point to the North of the site at approximately 105m AOD.
- 4.1.5 The surrounding topography is varied (refer to Figure 5. Topography Plan), with the landform to the North, East and West defined by the floodplain of the River Arrow at approximately 93-95m AOD before rising towards Shobdon at 150m AOD to the North and the high point of Wapley Hill to the Northeast at 329m AOD.
- 4.1.6 To the South the landform gently rises to Bearwood Cross at 126m AOD which lies on a local ridgeline that crosses from Nutfield to the SouthEast to Lower Bearwood to the NorthWest.
- 4.1.7 The topography of the site is considered to be of medium susceptibility and sensitivity.

#### Hydrology

- 4.1.8 There is a small seasonal pond to the Northwest corner of the site which was wet at the time of the field survey. The hydrology features are considered be of medium susceptibility and low sensitivity.

## 4.2 Landscape Character

- 4.2.1 A description of the landscape character of the Site and surrounding area can be found at a national and regional level with the Natural England publication 'The Character Map of England' and the County Councils Landscape Character Assessment (refer to Figure 4. Landscape Character Plan).

### **National Character Area - NCA 100. 'Herefordshire Lowlands'**

- 4.2.2 The landscape character of the region is defined within Natural England's revised National Character Areas, published 2012 as NCA 100. 'Herefordshire Lowlands'. The Character Area is summarised as follows:

*The Herefordshire Lowlands National Character Area (NCA) lies almost entirely within Herefordshire, with small areas to the north and east in Shropshire and Worcestershire and to the south-east in Gloucestershire. It is largely tranquil and rural in character but does include the larger settlements of Hereford and Leominster. There are small dispersed settlements of hamlets and villages, many of which contain older buildings with the local vernacular of black-and white timber-framed buildings. Restored cider barns with characteristic double doors and historic farmsteads are also common.*

*The landscape is gently undulating with steep-sided cornstone hills in the central area dominated by ancient woodland of ash and field maple or oak and bracken. Woodland within the area is a significant landscape feature, typically on the hill tops and valley sides. Many of these woodlands are actively managed (commercially) to produce quality timber, for example Garnons Estate. The NCA is an important area for commercial agricultural supported by the fertile and high-grade agricultural soils; the farming is mixed arable and livestock. Traditional orchards are still to be found, though suffering decline, with new orchards and dwarf varieties of trees also common. The area is also important for commercial production of soft fruit under polytunnels, supplying much of the UK. Historic parklands such as at Berrington Hall have many veteran trees that are important for invertebrates.'*

### **Regional Landscape Character Areas**

#### **Landscape Character Sub-regional Areas - 'Central Herefordshire'**

- 4.2.3 In addition to the National Character Area definition, Herefordshire Council's County supplementary planning guidance called 'Landscape Character Assessment' (LCA), published in September 2004 and updated in 2009 notes five principle landscape character types within Herefordshire and identifies the Site as falling within the sub regional character area of the 'Central Herefordshire'.

#### **Landscape Types – 'Principal Settled Farmlands'**

- 4.2.4 The boundaries in the LCA are defined on the maps and identifies the Site within the Landscape Character Type of 'Principal Settled Farmlands' (refer to Appendix A), described as:

*'The rolling, lowland area of Central Herefordshire is dominated by this Landscape Type. These are settled agricultural landscapes of dispersed, scattered farms, relic commons and small villages and hamlets. The mixed farming land use reflects the good soils on which they are typically found. Networks of small winding lanes nestling*



within a matrix of hedged fields are characteristic. Tree cover is largely restricted to thinly scattered hedgerow trees, groups of trees around dwellings and trees along stream sides and other watercourses. The composition of the hedgerow tree cover differs from that of Timbered Farmlands in its lower density and lack of oak dominance. This is a landscape with a notably domestic character, defined chiefly by the scale of its field pattern, the nature and density of its settlement and its traditional land uses. Hop fields, orchards, grazed pastures and arable fields, together make up the rich patchwork which is typical of Principal Settled Farmlands.'

Key Characteristics:

#### Primary

- hedgerows used for field boundaries

#### Secondary

- mixed farming land use

4.2.5 In describing the settlement pattern the LCA states that:

*'The dispersed settlement pattern of farmsteads and hamlets is capable of accommodating limited new development if it is in accordance with UDP policy. Low densities of individual dwellings would be acceptable as long as they are not sited close enough to coalesce into a prominent wayside settlement pattern. Additional housing in hamlets and villages should be modest in size in order to preserve the character of the original settlement.'*

4.2.6 The landscape character is therefore considered to be of low susceptibility and sensitivity.

### **4.3 Cultural Heritage**

4.3.1 Within the Site itself there are no known registered or designated cultural heritage assets.

4.3.2 Part of the site however falls within the 'Pembridge Conservation Area' summarised within the PNDP Appendix 1: Pembridge Conservation Area – Assessment of Character and Appearance which states that:

*'At the eastern entrance to the conservation area on the A44 the road falls and turns towards the village, a high hedge overhangs the road on the north side screening more recent development which extends unobtrusively beyond what appears to be the village edge. On the south side is a wide grass verge, a low hedge and several overhanging trees. Again, there is a village gateway at the entrance to the village with its associated signs, bollards and road markings indicating a road width restriction. A touring caravan site is located on the south side of the village entrance, although it is hidden behind rising ground and hedge. The village edge does not extend as far to the east on this side of the A44'*

4.3.3 The Grade II listed Townsend Farmhouse is located 65 metres from the proposed development Site.

- 4.3.4 The Cultural Heritage of the site and surroundings is therefore considered to be of low susceptibility and sensitivity.

#### 4.4 Landscape Features

- 4.4.1 The Site comprises three parcels of improved pasture used for horse grazing divided to the East by a mixed native hedgerow including Hawthorn, Hazel, Elm, Rosa, Elder in poor condition (refer to Figure 3. Aerial Photograph) incorporating two mature Oak trees. To the Northwest the fields are divided by a post and wire fence.
- 4.4.2 The Northern boundary with East Street is defined by mixed native hedgerow varying in height from 1 to 3 metres including Hawthorn, Field maple, Hazel, Elm, Rose, Elder, Dogwood & Honeysuckle punctuated by occasional young Lime and Oak trees, with a small group trees including large mature Poplar, Hawthorn and Field maple in the centre of the Northern boundary.
- 4.4.3 The Eastern boundary is defined by a mixed native hedgerow varying in 2 to 3 metres in height including Hawthorn, Field maple, Hazel, Elm, Elder & Blackthorn punctuated by young Ash trees and a mature Oak. A small young woodland lies immediately to the Northeast which includes Oak, Sweet chestnut, Cherry and Ash.
- 4.4.4 The Southern boundary is defined by post and wire fencing with two small pockets of young native trees including Silver Birch, Oak, Wild Cherry, Ash and Lime to the Southeast and Southwest.
- 4.4.5 The Western boundary is defined by a mixed native hedgerow varying from 1.5 to 2 to metres in height including Hawthorn, Field maple, Hazel, Rose, Elder & Blackthorn with a large mature Oak adjacent to the field entrance.
- 4.4.6 The Northwest and Southwestern corners of the site are crossed by overhead electrical pylons with timber posts. No other notable features are located within the Site.
- 4.4.7 The landscape features as described above are considered be of medium susceptibility and sensitivity.

#### Landscape Value

- 4.4.8 In accordance with Table 1 of the assessment methodology the landscape condition or quality can be categorised as being 'ordinary' quality with *'distinguishable landscape structure, characteristic patterns of landform and land cover often masked by land use. Scope to improve management of vegetation, some features worthy of conversation, some detracting features.'*
- 4.4.9 The Site does not lie within or form part of a World Heritage Site, National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) or other such landscape character or quality designations. The site is however partly located within The Pembridge Conservation Area as described above.
- 4.4.10 The Site is a pasture field with native hedgerow boundaries. There is currently one neighbouring residential properties a small bungalow to the North with the site overlooked by the neighbouring campsite to the South. The site is not publically accessible with no permissive footpaths.

- 4.4.11 The value of the landscape can therefore be considered to be of medium susceptibility and low sensitivity.

## 4.5 Landscape Mitigation Measures

- 4.5.1 The concept design of the layout for the proposed development has been prepared by architects John Needham Associates. This has been prepared in accordance with a series of design principles to address the criteria of the National Planning Policy Framework as described within the Design and Access Statement.

### Development Proposals

- 4.5.2 The development proposes a residential development of up to 22 no. dwellings as illustrated in Figure 6. Site Layout. The design of the layout and location and shape of the development has evolved to maximise the opportunities provided by the Site and minimise and mitigate the effect on the identified constraints.

- 4.5.3 The landscape constraints include:

- existing hedgerows and trees to the site boundaries
- mature trees to the Southeast corner of the site
- the loss of agricultural land
- sloping topography
- existing property to the Northern boundary.

- 4.5.4 The landscape opportunities include:

- the retention and enhancement of the existing boundary hedgerows as inclusive elements of the development retaining and improving existing habitats;
- the retention of the existing trees as inclusive elements of the development;
- the provision of additional plot boundary hedgerows and trees within the development enhancing the scheme's appearance and variety of habitats.

### Mitigation Strategy (Landscape)

- 4.5.5 The landscape mitigation strategy for the proposed development revolves around three core principles as illustrated within Figure 07 'Landscape Strategy Plan'. These principles have evolved as part of the landscape assessment process to protect and respond to the landscape resources and planning policy guidance and have informed the design of the proposed development layout.

#### *Core Principles (Landscape)*

- 1) *To conserve and enhance the existing landscape features including existing pond, native boundary hedgerows and mature trees.*
- 2) *To enhance the existing landscape character by incorporating characteristic soft landscape features such as hedgerows and trees within and to the Southern edge of the development.*
- 3) *To maintain the existing landscape character by incorporating traditional vernacular building design, features and materials.*

- 4.5.6 Any retained trees and hedgerows are to be protected in accordance with British Standard 5837:2012 '*Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations*'.
- 4.5.7 The plot landscape is to include wildlife attracting and native shrub species within the design including native & ornamental tree species.

## **4.6 Prediction of Landscape effects**

### **Landscape Receptors**

- 4.6.1 The anticipated landscape effects of the proposed development on the Site have been evaluated in relation to the statutory and non-statutory landscape designations or classifications, the local landscape character assessment and the individual landscape elements and features.

### **Land Use**

- 4.6.2 The effect of the development proposals on the land use of the main Site area will be a negative change from open horse pasture to built development and road infrastructure of a medium magnitude across the site with a loss of good to moderate quality agricultural land. The scale of the proposed effect on land use could therefore be considered to be moderate adverse.
- 4.6.3 The effect of the inclusion of open space and landscape infrastructure within the development will change the open pasture to built development with green space and a range of diverse habitats and plant species which is considered to have a positive effect. The overall effect on land use after mitigation can therefore be considered to be slight – moderate adverse.

### **Topography**

- 4.6.4 The effect of the proposed development on the topography of the Site will result in a low magnitude of change with the proposed layout designed to follow the landform resulting in a slight - moderate adverse effect.

### **Hydrology**

- 4.6.5 The proposed development includes for the retention of the existing pond as part of the proposed development. The magnitude of change will be low with a slight adverse effect.

### Landscape Character Types

- 4.6.6 The local landscape character assessment identified the site as being within the landscape type 'Principal Settled Farmlands' described as being settled agricultural landscapes of dispersed, scattered farms, relic commons and small villages and hamlets with thinly scattered hedgerow trees and groups of trees around dwellings. Key characteristics identified include hedgerows used for field boundaries and mixed farming land use, capable of accommodating limited new development.
- 4.6.7 The proposed development retains the existing landscape characteristics to the Northern, Eastern and Western boundaries of the site, retaining and enhancing the existing perimeter native hedgerows and trees with the introduction of new native hedge and tree planting to the Southern boundary and within the development itself. The magnitude of change to the landscape character is therefore considered to be medium with a slight- moderate adverse post mitigation effect.
- 4.6.8 A well-designed and considered residential development within the Site, located on the edge of the existing settlement of Pembridge would not be of significant detriment to the overall landscape character, with the surrounding vegetation and the existing and new built development to the North increasing the capacity of the area to accept the degree of change. The post mitigation effect on landscape character is therefore considered to be slight adverse.

### Cultural Heritage

- 4.6.9 The Heritage Impact Statement prepared for the planning application states that *'With regard to the impact of the proposed new dwellings on existing historic buildings in the village it is considered that the development site is clearly distinct and separate from the core historic streetscene and thus whilst being complimentary it will not compromise the character of the village or the principal setting of heritage assets close by'* and concludes *'it is considered that the proposed redevelopment of the immediate agricultural land adjacent to Townsend Farm will involve a changed approach to the Eastern end of Pembridge village but will not incur an unacceptable level of harm to interests of acknowledged importance. In terms of the NPPF the impact will be less than substantial.'*
- 4.6.10 In conclusion the proposed development will not have a significant effect on any cultural heritage features or their setting. At the edge of the Pembridge Conservation Area the site is considered to have low sensitivity to development which combined with the scale of the proposed development or medium magnitude of change results in a potential Slight- moderate adverse effect on cultural heritage prior to mitigation.
- 4.6.11 As described in the Heritage Statement the effect on the heritage assets is mitigated by the development being set back from the main road within a landscaped setting. The proposed dwellings have been designed to reflect the traditional vernacular building forms and materials with visual interest such as intersecting roofs and gables, roofing materials, the proportion of windows and walling materials to complement the established historic forms and create a seamless continuation of the recognised character of the village. The post mitigation effect on the cultural heritage is therefore considered to be slight adverse.

## Landscape Features

- 4.6.12 The proposed development has been designed to retain and augment the existing mature hedgerows and trees that border the Site, which are for the most part to be retained, managed and augmented where required with proposed trees and new hedgerow planting particularly to the Southern boundary. The magnitude of change is considered to be low resulting in a 'Slight – Moderate' adverse effect prior to mitigation. The proposed landscape infrastructure will increase the biodiversity of the site and as such the proposals will have a negligible / slight beneficial effect on landscape features.

## Landscape Value

- 4.6.13 The effect of the proposed development on the condition or quality of the landscape is deemed to be of a low magnitude with a notable alteration of the land cover over a large proportion of the Site resulting in a slight adverse effect prior to mitigation. When balanced against the retention, enhancement and replacement of beneficial features and landscape structure the post mitigation effect is deemed to be a negligible effect.

<b>Table 7: Landscape Effect Summary</b>				
<b>Receptor Type</b>	<b>Receptor Sensitivity</b>	<b>Magnitude of Change without Mitigation (Table 2)</b>	<b>Scale of Proposed effect (Table 3)</b>	<b>Judged Scale of Proposed effect (with Mitigation where applicable)</b>
Land use	Medium	Medium	<b>Moderate adverse</b>	<b>Slight – moderate adverse</b>
Topography	Medium	Low	<b>Slight – moderate adverse</b>	<b>Slight – moderate adverse</b>
Hydrology	Low	Low	<b>Slight adverse</b>	<b>Slight adverse</b>
Landscape Character	Low	Medium	<b>Slight – moderate adverse</b>	<b>Slight adverse</b>
Cultural Heritage	Low	Medium	<b>Slight – moderate adverse</b>	<b>Slight adverse</b>
Landscape Features	Medium	Low	<b>Slight - moderate adverse</b>	<b>Negligible – Slight beneficial</b>
Landscape value	Low	Low	<b>Slight adverse</b>	<b>Negligible</b>

## **VISUAL ASSESSMENT**

## 5.0 ASSESSMENT OF VISUAL EFFECTS

- 5.0.1 The following section provides a summary of the baseline or current condition of the Site and surrounding area informed by the desktop and field surveys against which the likely visual effect of the development proposals is to be assessed.

### 5.1 Baseline Conditions

#### Settlement

- 5.1.1 Pembridge is a small post-medieval market town with new residential developments on the fringes of the settlement. The Site is located Southeast of the village to the rear of Townsend Farm and bordering the rear gardens of existing residential properties off East Street.
- 5.1.2 Pembridge village is located approximately 10Km (6.2 miles) West of the town Leominster, 9km (5.5 miles) East of Kington and 21 Km (13 miles) Southwest of the market town of Ludlow.
- 5.1.3 Other large villages such as Shobdon, Kingsland, Eardisland and Dilwyn are located to the North, Northeast and Southeast of Pembridge (refer to Figure 1; Contextual Plan) with the surrounding landscape dispersed with numerous hamlets, farms, small holdings and associated fields.

#### Transport

- 5.1.4 The main transport links to the Site are by road. The A44 trunk road that runs through the centre of Pembridge serves as the main link between Central Wales to the West and the City of Worcester and the M5 to the East, with the A49 at Leominster linking to Ludlow and Shrewsbury to the North and Hereford and Bristol to the South.
- 5.1.5 There are no direct rail links near the Site. The nearest rail routes pass through the town of Leominster to the East. Shobdon Airfield is a private licensed airfield located to the North of Pembridge.

#### Public Rights of Way (PROW's)

- 5.1.6 No public rights of way cross the proposed site.
- 5.1.7 The nearest public right of way is Pembridge PM61 that links the A44 to Upper Hardwick to the East of the Site (refer to Figure 2. Location Plan). To the Northeast Pembridge PM60 links the East of Pembridge with the PROW Eardisland ED7#2 to the North and Pembridge PM29#2 runs from Bearwood Lane past St Marys Church to the Southwest.

### 5.2 Visual baseline

- 5.2.1 As part of the visual assessment the roads, footpaths and areas available to public access were reviewed to inform and further define the 'Zone of Theoretical Visibility' (see Figure 8) which was originally generated digitally from OS terrain (only) data. Only areas identified by the computer generated model shown on the ZTV plan and following desk tops analysis were assessed in detail on Site to identify the specific



actual viewpoints. A total of nine viewpoints were recorded as identified in Figure 9. Viewpoint Location Plan.

- 5.2.2 The ZTV plan (Figure 8) supported by the Topography plan (Figure 5) illustrates the low lying position the site occupies adjacent to the River Arrow and the limited potential for views from the South, with the majority of possible views of the proposed development primarily be from the North and East.
- 5.2.3 The ZTV plan also shows that there could be possible views from over 3 kilometres away to the West, North and South. However the field survey has determined that topography, vegetation, settlement and other structures, most notably existing woodland, trees and hedgerows of the regular enclosed fields, obstruct views of the Site from many locations. An approximate area from where the Site may actually be visible is represented as the visual envelope, illustrated on the Photo Viewpoint Location & Visual Envelope Plan (Figure 9).
- 5.2.4 The following nine viewpoints were considered based on the ZTV plan and subsequent field survey. The locations of the eight viewpoints are shown on Figure 9. with the photographs shown in Figures 10-18.
- 5.2.5 In order to reduce the need to flip between Figures to main text and vice versa, all of the text relevant to the viewpoint is included on the same page as the viewpoint photograph (Figures 10-18).

<b>Table 7: Viewpoints Summary</b>				
<b>Name of Viewpoint</b>	<b>Distance / Direction to Site</b>	<b>Receptor Type</b>	<b>Sensitivity</b>	<b>V'point/ Fig No.</b>
PM60, in front of No.1 Trafford Cottages (the Almshouse)	117m East South East	Motorists / Residential (Primary & Secondary)	Low / Medium / High	1 (Fig 10)
East Street, Townsend Farm	72m East South East	Motorists / Residential (Primary & Secondary)	Low / Medium / High	2 (Fig 11)
East Street, opposite the end of PM61	55m West South West	Motorists	Low	3 (Fig 12)
PM61, corner of campsite	123m West North West	Public right of Way	Medium	4 (Fig 13)
PM60, over Oak View Farm barn	270m South East	Public Rights of Way	Medium	5 (Fig 14)
ED7#2, Long Meadow	474m South South West	Public Rights of Way	Medium	6 (Fig 15)
ED7#2, Long Meadow footbridge	736m South South West	Public Rights of Way	Medium	7 (Fig 16)
PM61, Farm Track	456m	Public Rights of Way	Medium	8 (Fig 17)
PM29#2 near Telephone Mast	527m North East	Public Rights of Way	Medium	9 (Fig 18)

## 5.3 Visual Mitigation Measures

### Development Proposals

- 5.3.1 The development proposes a residential development of up to 22 no. dwellings, including garages, access roads and associated landscaping. The design of the layout has evolved to maximise the opportunities provided by the Site and minimise and mitigate the effect on the identified visual constraints.
- 5.3.2 The visual constraints include:
- short distance views from East Street and adjacent residential properties.
  - short distance views from public rights of way PM60 & PM61
  - medium distance views from public rights way PM60, PM61, PM29#2 and ED7#2.
- 5.3.3 The opportunities for visual mitigation include:
- space to provide a landscaped access buffer to filter views into the development from East Street.
  - retaining and supplementing the existing perimeter hedgerows to screen lower levels views from the North and West.
  - retaining and supplementing existing mature trees to further filter higher level views from the North, West and South;
  - introduction of internal tree planting to filter views into the development and break up the roofscape;
  - continual management and maintenance of all existing perimeter planting to ensure longevity allowing boundary hedges to grow in height.

### Mitigation Strategy (Visual)

- 5.3.4 Based on the above constraints and opportunities the visual mitigation strategy for the proposed development revolves around four core principles as illustrated within Figure 07 'Landscape Strategy Plan'. These principles have evolved as part of the visual assessment process to protect and respond to the visual resources and receptors and have informed the design of the proposed development layout.

#### Core Principles (Visual)

- 1) *Retain the existing boundary hedgerows, allow to grow in height and augment with new boundary hedgerows to further filter lower level views into the Site from various aspects.*
- 2) *Retain the existing trees to the Northern boundary and supplement with additional tree planting within boundary hedges to further filter views from various aspects.*
- 3) *Set the built form back from the East Street road frontage to provide a landscaped buffer to the development from the North.*
- 4) *Introduce a layer of structural hedge and tree planting within the Site to break up the visual mass of the development and roofscape.*

## 5.4 Prediction of Visual effects.

- 5.4.1 The anticipated visual effects of the proposed development will be those changes to visual amenity which affect the visual receptors within the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Visual Envelope as illustrated on Figures 8 & 9. The identified visual envelope is comparatively small, defined by landform, existing vegetation, trees and woodland North, East, South, and the settlement of Pembridge to the West. The result of this is that the proposals have a very limited effect with only on a relatively small number of receptors.

### High Sensitivity Visual Receptors

- 5.4.2 Within the visual envelope, high sensitivity receptors are limited to ground floor direct, filtered and seasonal views from the East Street residential properties to the West including The Gables and Townsend Farmhouse, with oblique views from Trafford Cottages (the Almshouses) and the Old Oak House.
- 5.4.3 Views from high sensitivity receptors from directly West will be partially mitigated by retaining the existing native boundary hedges and augmenting existing trees to the Northern and Western site boundary, allowing the hedgerow to grow in height and the planting of new trees to the Western edge of the site to further limit views with the predicted effect being moderate - adverse.
- 5.4.4 The proposed structural tree planting within the development area will further mitigate and soften the appearance of built form and roofscape as it appears from a number of aspects.

### Medium Sensitivity Visual Receptors

- 5.4.5 Evaluation of the viewpoints indicated that there are a small number of medium sensitive receptors such as first floor residential properties and users of the public rights of way.
- 5.4.6 The residential properties as noted above (Townsend Farmhouse, Trafford Cottages the Old Oak House) Walnut Cottage, Lower House and Mere Court will have first floor medium sensitivity views from the West with Eastview, Oak Cottage, 1 & 2 Clover Meadow and mitigated by retaining the existing native boundary hedges and augmenting existing trees to the Northern and Western site boundary, allowing the hedgerow to grow in height and the planting of new trees to the Western and Northern edge of the site to further limit views with the predicted effect being moderate - adverse.
- 5.4.7 Public right of Way PM61 runs Southwards from East Street along the outer edge of the Townsend Touring & Caravan Park and along a farm track towards Upper Harwick Farm and affords potential transient, seasonal filtered views of the elevated Eastern and Southern edge of the proposed development, mitigated through the augmentation of the screening afforded by the existing offsite trees by planting new trees to the Eastern and Southern boundary of the site to further limit views with the predicated effect being negligible.

- 5.4.8 Public right of Way PM60 runs Northwards from East Street along the outer edge of the village and affords potential transient, partially filtered and seasonal views of the roofscape of the proposed development, mitigated through the augmentation of the screening afforded by the existing offsite trees by planting new trees to the Northern edge of the site to further limit views with the predicated effect being negligible.
- 5.4.9 Public right of Way ED7#2 runs East to West across Long Meadow to the Northeast of Pembridge and affords potential transient, seasonal partially filtered glimpses of the elevated Eastern and Southern end of the proposed development, mitigated through the augmentation of the screening afforded by the existing offsite trees by planting new trees to the Northern edge of the site and within the development to further limit views with the predicated effect being negligible.
- 5.4.10 Public right of Way PM29#2 crosses St Mary's Churchyard from Bearwood Lane running through the fields to the West before rejoining Bearwood Lane and affords transient, partially filtered and seasonal views of the Southern and Western end of the proposed development mitigated by the planting of new trees to the Western and Southern edge of the site to limit and filter views with the predicated effect being slight to moderate – adverse.

#### Low Sensitivity Visual Receptors

- 5.4.11 The last main group of identified receptors are those entering and leaving Pembridge along East Street which are in the main motorists. Due to the transient nature of these receptors the speed of view and the proposed mitigation to the North of the development, the predicted effect on them will be slight to moderate adverse to negligible.

#### **Scale of Proposed visual Effect**

- 5.4.12 The information on visual effects is contained within the text contained on each of the separate figures. In terms of a summary the summary table below (Table 8) gives the results (magnitude /scale of effect) for each of the views. See Figure 09 for location and Figures 10-18 for individual views.

<b>Table 8: Visual Effect Summary</b>						
<b>View Point No.</b>	<b>Distance/ Direction to Site</b>	<b>Receptor Type</b>	<b>Receptor Sensitivity</b>	<b>Magnitude of Change without Mitigation (Table 5)</b>	<b>Scale of Proposed effect (Table 6)</b>	<b>Judged Scale of Proposed effect (with Mitigation)</b>
1 (Fig 10)	117m East South East	Motorists / Residential (Primary & Secondary)	Low / Medium / High	Medium	<b>Moderate – Substantial adverse</b>	<b>Moderate adverse</b>
2 (Fig 11)	72m East South East	Motorists / Residential (Primary & Secondary)	Low / Medium / High	Medium	<b>Moderate – Substantial adverse</b>	<b>Moderate adverse</b>
3 (Fig 12)	55m West South West	Motorists	Low	Low	<b>Slight - adverse</b>	<b>Negligible</b>

4 (Fig 13)	123m West North West	Public Rights of Way	Medium	Low	<b>Slight – Moderate adverse</b>	<b>Negligible</b>
5 (Fig 14)	270m South East	Public Rights of Way	Medium	Low	<b>Slight – Moderate adverse</b>	<b>Negligible</b>
6 (Fig 15)	474m South South West	Public Rights of Way	Medium	Low	<b>Slight – Moderate adverse</b>	<b>Negligible</b>
7 (Fig 16)	736m South South West	Public Rights of Way	Medium	Negligible	<b>Negligible</b>	<b>Negligible</b>
8 (Fig 17)	456m North East	Public Rights of Way	Medium	Low	<b>Slight – Moderate adverse</b>	<b>Negligible</b>
9 (Fig 18)	527m North East	Public Rights of Way	Medium	Medium	<b>Moderate adverse</b>	<b>Slight to Moderate - adverse</b>

## SUMMARY

## 6.0 NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

- 6.0.1 The assessment of visual and landscape effects has been carried out in accordance with 'Guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', 2013, a joint publication by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and the Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland, published by the Countryside Agency; 2002.
- 6.0.2 The proposals are to develop an area of existing pasture for 'the construction of up to 22 dwellings with formation of access from East Street and from Townsend Farm with associated garages, car parking and landscaping' (refer to Figure 06, Planning Layout).

### 6.1 Landscape effects

- 6.1.1 The Site lies within the control of Herefordshire Council within the Parish of Pembridge.
- 6.1.2 The Site is approximately 2.07 hectares, and will contain up to approximately 22 dwellings accessed from East Street and from Townsend Farm with no public rights of way, bridle ways or roads crossing the Site (refer to Figure 2. Location Plan).
- 6.1.3 The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) for the Site, appears to be identified on the ALC Maps for the West Midlands as Grade 2 'Very Good' agricultural land and is identified within the ecology survey as improved pasture.
- 6.1.4 The landscape character of the development area is identified at national level as NCA 100. 'Herefordshire Lowlands' generally being '*largely tranquil and rural in character but does include the larger settlements of Hereford and Leominster. There are small dispersed settlements of hamlets and villages, many of which contain older buildings with the local vernacular of black-and white timber-framed buildings. Restored cider barns with characteristic double doors and historic farmsteads are also common*'. The regional level Landscape Types as assessed by Hereford Council describe the Site as being situated within 'Principal Settled Farmlands' (refer to Figure 4. Landscape Character Plan), with key characteristics including hedgerows used for field boundaries and mixed farming land use.
- 6.1.5 Within the Site itself there are no known registered or designated cultural heritage assets with half of the Site falling within the Pembridge Conservation Area with Townsend Farmhouse a Grade 2 listed building located within 65 metres to the West of the Site.
- 6.1.6 The landscape quality and condition of the Site itself, is classified as being 'Ordinary'. The Site does not lie within or form part of a World Heritage Site, National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) or similar landscape character or quality designations.
- 6.1.7 The Site comprises three parcels of improved grassland, bordered to the North and East by established Hawthorn hedges of varying height and condition with boundary and onsite and offsite mature trees to the Northern, Western and Eastern site boundaries (refer to Figure 3. Aerial Photograph).

- 6.1.8 The design of the proposed layout (refer to Figure 6. Planning Layout) has evolved to maximise the opportunities provided by the Site and minimise and mitigate the effect on the identified constraints including the existing boundary hedgerows and trees and setting of the Conservation Area.
- 6.1.9 The landscape mitigation strategy (refer to Figure 7. Landscape Strategy Plan) is based on three core principles including the conservation and enhancement of the existing characteristic boundary hedgerow and mature trees, the incorporation of similar landscape hedge and tree features within and to the Southern edge of the development and the use of traditional vernacular building designs, features and materials.
- 6.1.10 The assessment of the likely effects of the proposed development on the landscape receptors has concluded that there will potentially be a negligible to slight beneficial effect on landscape features, a negligible effect on the land value; a slight adverse effect on the hydrology, landscape character and cultural heritage and a slight to moderate adverse effect on the landuse and topography.

## 6.2 Visual effects

- 6.2.1 The Site is located East of the small market town of Pembridge bordering East Street to the North, Townsend Touring & Caravan Park to the South and surrounding the residential static bungalow Appleby, The Telephone Exchange with the town of Pembridge to the West (refer to Figure 03. Aerial Photograph).
- 6.2.2 As part of the visual assessment the roads, footpaths and areas available to public access were reviewed to further define the 'Zone of Theoretical Visibility' (see Figure 8) which was generated digitally from OS terrain (only) data. Nine viewpoints were evaluated within the 'visual envelope' of the Site (refer to Figure 9. Viewpoint Location & Visual Envelope), to assess the likely effect of the proposals on the visual receptors as shown in Figures 10-18. The visual receptors identified include residential properties, public rights of way and motorists.
- 6.2.3 The development proposals maximise the opportunities provided by the Site including the retention of the existing hedgerows and trees, utilising the natural landform; whilst responding to the visual constraints that include the proximity of residential dwellings and their inward views from East Street and the open Southern boundary.
- 6.2.4 The landscape strategy plan Figure 7. has been designed to provide landscape mitigation to address the constraints provided by the visual receptors and is based on four core principles including setting back the development from the East street road frontage, the retention and enhancement of the boundary hedges and boundary trees with structural and hedge tree planting both to the Southern boundary and within the development to break up the visual mass of the dwellings.
- 6.2.5 The assessment of the likely visual effects of the development on the high sensitivity visual receptors after mitigation concluded that there will be a moderate adverse effect to the residential properties to the West of the Site along East Street.
- 6.2.6 The likely visual effects of the proposed development to the medium sensitivity visual receptors including the residential properties to the West and North of the Site, the public rights of way PM60, PM61, ED7#2 and PM29#2 after mitigation are considered to be negligible to slight - moderate adverse.



- 6.2.7 The assessment of the likely visual effects of the development on the low sensitivity visual receptors after mitigation concluded that there would be a negligible or slight to moderate adverse visual effect on motorists using East Street to the West and North of the proposed development Site.

### 6.3 Conclusion

- 6.3.1 The Site has been identified for new housing development within Policy PEM 4: 'Housing Sites in Pembridge' of the Pembridge Neighbourhood Development Plan (March 2019) which states that '*a new housing development may take place, provided they meet the requirements set out in the relevant design and detailed policies within this plan.*' and '*a low-density scheme behind a strong landscaped screen would be suitable.*' This assessment establishes and confirms that the proposals for a residential development at the Land at Townsend Farm, Pembridge can be accommodated within the identified Site without undue effect on the landscape character and visual amenity of the surrounding area
- 6.3.2 The proposed development site reflects the recently completed Clover Meadow housing scheme to the North of East Street which extends the town settlement pattern of Pembridge to the East, contained by the existing woodland, landform and surrounding land use.
- 6.3.3 The landscape mitigation proposed within the development including the landscape buffer to the North of the site, retaining and enhancing existing hedgerows and trees and the incorporation new native perimeter trees and hedges will help both screen the development and integrate it in the surrounding landscape.

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