

Harewood End & Visual Impact Assessment

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1 Introduction

1.1 The Document

The Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment has been prepared on behalf of the site owner.

This is a Planning application for two residential properties on a site in **Harewood End** Herefordshire.

The methodology to prepare this document is in accordance with the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' Third Edition , produced by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment. Refer to the Appendix for details.

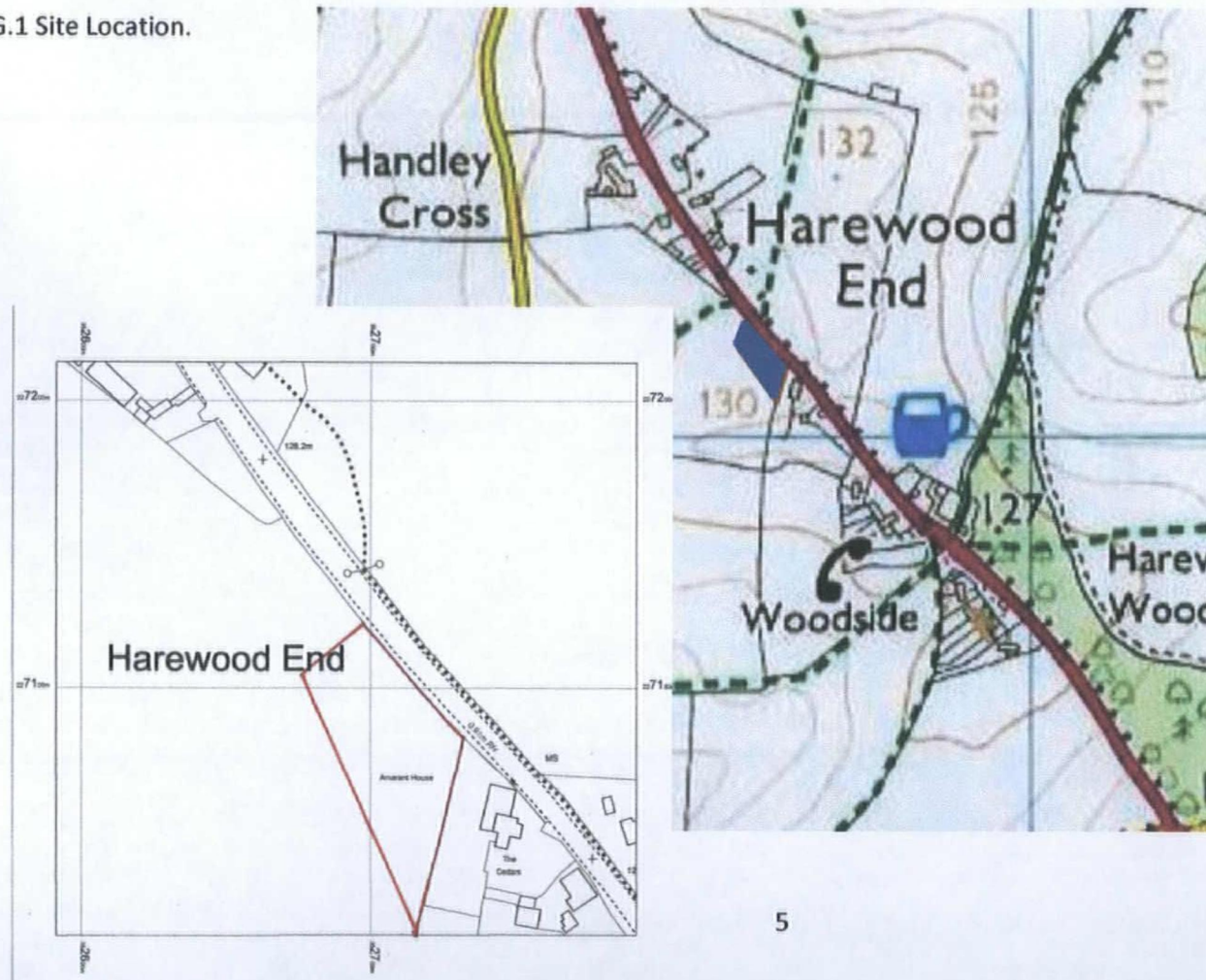
The purpose of this document is to assess the Landscape and visual impact of the proposed residential development on the site and its surroundings. It describes the methodology used to undertake the assessment, evaluates the Landscape character and the extent of views on to the site from the surrounding area. The assessment also examines potential effects on the existing Landscape resources, Visual receptors and identifies appropriate mitigation proposals.

1.2 The Proposal Site

The proposal site is located off the A49 between Ross on Wye and Hereford.

The site is defined in more detail later in the document.

FIG.1 Site Location.



Proposed Site

1.3 Summary of Proposals

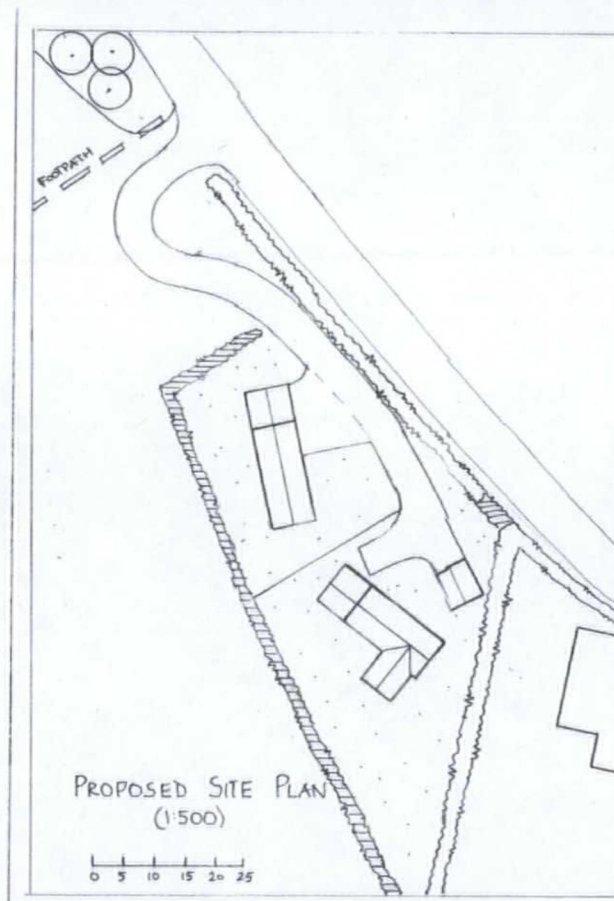
The Development site

The proposed Development includes approximately 0.3 hectares. The proposed development includes two residential properties and highway access off the A49.

The development comprises two detached houses with garages and gardens.

Landscape-The proposed Landscape scheme for the site includes tree and hedge planting along the site boundaries.

Development Framework



2. Landscape Baseline

2.1 Introduction

The site location is described in terms of the Landscape character and setting. The assessment identifies the contribution the site makes to the local Landscape character. Information for this document has been gathered from a combination of desktop study and site survey in August 2017.

2.2 Landscape Character

National Character (Natural England)

In the Herefordshire 'Landscape Character Assessment' SPG (Supplementary Planning Guidelines), Harewood End and its surroundings are described as 'Sandstone Farmlands'. This Landscape type is found in the Archenfield area of Southern Herefordshire. Described in the SPG- "These are upstanding agricultural landscapes with a moderate to gently undulating landform."

Ref. Herefordshire Landscape Character Assessment SPG-2004 updated 2009.

2.3 Landscape Character

'Sandstone Farmlands' landscape type is predominately agricultural with mixed usage, from livestock grazing to market gardening and medium to large fields enclosed by hedgerows. The settlement pattern in this area includes scattered farmsteads and small villages.

Herefordshire Landscape Character Assessment SPG-2004 updated 2009.

Adjacent land use to the West of the Site includes an area of poly tunnels for soft fruit production and arable fields. The Site is located in a field of improved pasture bounded by mature hedgerows. Hedgerows vary in height from 2.5 metres up to 8 metres, predominantly mixed indigenous species, the hedge along the A49 is predominately hawthorn.

The A49 runs along the North Eastern boundary of the Site, a busy main route between Hereford and Ross on Wye

2.4 Features & views contributing to character

The Site is on land that slopes away from the A49 above the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Mature straight Hedgerows divide the fields and small stands of woodland punctuate the landscape. Views to and from the AONB are restricted by mature hedgerows and topography because the Valley slopes away from the Site.

Mature hedgerows and mature specimen trees within the hedgerows around the Site location are dominant feature in the landscape.

2.5 Landscape Setting

Designations.

The Development Site is not within a designated area but it is approximately 10 metres from the Wye Valley AONB boundary which follows the route of the A49 to the North East.

Vegetation

The Site is on improved pasture land surrounded by mature mixed hedgerow up to 8 m in height with occasional mature Oak, Ash and Hawthorn within the hedge line. Species in the hedgerows include Blackthorn, Hawthorn, Hazel, Elm, Elder and Rose. (*Prunus spinosa*, *Crateagus Monogyna*, *Corylus avellana*, *Ulmus minor* 'Atinia' *Sambucus nigra*, *Rosa arvensis*)

Access & Rights of way

There are no PROW on the Site. (Public Right of Way)

Access on to the Site

Vehicle access onto the Site is currently from the Netherton Lane to the West of the Site and a gate in the A49 boundary hedge. Proposed access will be off the A49.

Topography & Hydrology

The Site is located on a level area of the field although the land slopes gently to the North West. There are no water courses on the site and the soil type is a reddish 'silty' loam typical in the area.

2.6 Landscape Quality & Importance

The local landscape displays several of the characteristics outlined in the Herefordshire County Council 'Landscape Character Assessment' SPG 2004 updated 2009. In this SPG document the area West of Leominster is classified as 'Sandstone Farmland'.

The site lies in an area of "Good quality landscape" according to the table 1 in the Methodology.

Table 1 defines Good Quality Landscape as "Countryside with some variety in farmland cover. Settlements and villages with pockets of open space and public recreation areas. There is a reasonable distribution of semi-natural vegetation, trees and shrub cover and the overall view of the area is pleasant."

2.7 Summary of Landscape Receptors and Sensitivity

Landscape receptors are defined in the Assessment Methodology section as 'landscape patterns' landscape elements', 'landscape character' or 'cumulative landscape effects'.

The landscape sensitivity is derived from consideration of its condition, value and capacity for change.

The landscape has been assessed as "good quality landscape" in an area of countryside West of Leominster.

Table 1 considers the condition of the Landscape elements on the site and in the surrounding area, including their sensitivity to change.

Element	Condition	Value	Capacity for change/Enhancement	Sensitivity
Hedge	The mature hedgerows are in good condition and well maintained.	Highly valued, for screening and wildlife corridors.	Existing hedgerows should be protected where possible and reinforced with further tree /shrub planting.	Medium
Trees	There are mature specimen trees around the site boundary including Oak & Ash.	Highly valued. They create texture and seasonal value in the landscape. They soften the impact of local and distant views by reducing the harshness of large buildings.	Existing trees on the boundaries should be protected where possible. Mature trees add texture and interest to any development.	Medium
Public rights of way	There is one PROW across the field approximately 30 m North of the Site. There are no PROWs on the Site.	Footpaths are highly valued and given priority for reasons of amenity value.	The Footpath could be protected from some of the visual impact of the development.	High
Designated areas	There are no designated areas, however the Site is within 20 m of the Wye Valley AONB.	An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty important National status, highly valued.	Views of the development on the Site should be restricted with hedging and the house design should reflect the vernacular style.	High
Field pattern	The open countryside around the site is characterised by a pattern of small to medium sized fields a significant feature of the landscape.	A valuable feature in the landscape.	The field pattern remains strong and should be retained.	Medium
Landscape character	The land use around the Site is predominantly agricultural including grazing, arable land and market gardening with small hamlets.	It is a good quality, attractive landscape.	Any development on the site should reinforce the Landscape Character of the area.	Medium

Table 1 – Matrix of Landscape Sensitivity

2.8 Summary of Landscape Impacts

The proposed development would form a continuation of the existing Harewood End Village along the A49. The building materials should be sympathetic in colour to the natural landscape and include local building materials to match the vernacular. **The existing trees and hedgerow on all the boundaries around the Site should be protected according to BS5837:2012 and managed as valuable landscape elements.** Proposed tree and hedge planting on the Site boundary would also reduce the impact on the landscape character.

VISUAL BASELINE

The Zone of Theoretical Visual influence (ZTVI) describes the area from which the proposal site is potentially visible from public viewpoints. Assessment of the visual influence is concentrated to areas from which the site is most likely to be viewed on roads, footpaths and in residential areas.

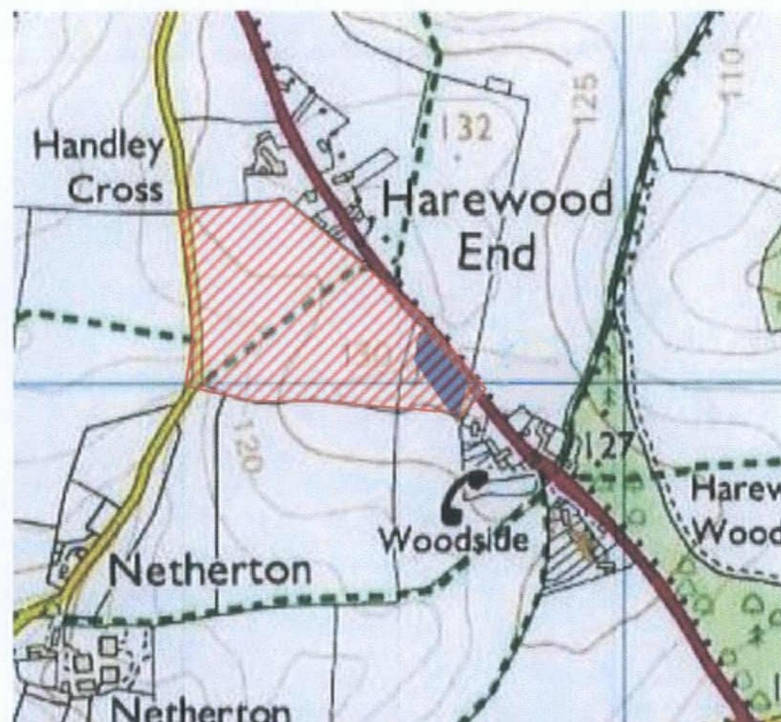


Figure 1 - Zone of Theoretical Visual Impact

3.1 Definition of Study Area

With regards to the visual impact assessment, the viewpoints identified further in this section were chosen due to their location near the site and other landscape features.

Beyond the area chosen, the visual impacts of the development were not considered likely to be significant. This decision was influenced in part by the proposed height of the development and also the local topography.

An area with a 2 km radius from the proposal site was surveyed first by map then on a site visit (April 2016) to assess the potential visual impact.

3.2 Sensitivity to Change

Sensitivity of the visual receptors is assessed using Table 3 in the appendix. The sensitivity depends on the activity the visual receptor is undertaking. For example walkers on a Public right of way (PRoW) are generally concentrating more on their natural surroundings than a driver concentrating on the lanes near the site. As such the walker on a PRoW is given a higher sensitivity rating than a driver on the road. Refer to Appendix 1 for the methodology in more detail.

3.3 Type of Impacts

Visual impacts may occur with the obstruction of a view or intrusion within an existing view.

Photographic data.

A thorough survey of the site walking on footpaths and visiting potential public viewpoints to determine the likely visibility of the development produced the following photographic data.

The viewpoints were selected as being most representative of all the potential views onto the site.

Photographs were taken to give the closest representation of the view from the human eye.

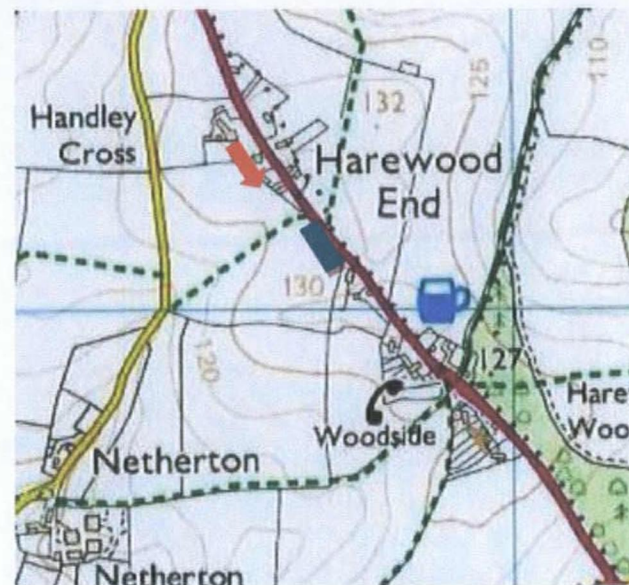
3.4 Theoretical Zone of Visual Influence.

The following pages make an assessment of the Theoretical Zone of Visual Influence (TZVI) for the proposed development. An area approximately 2 km radius was visited and only those viewpoints from which there was considered to be a potential impact are included here.

Eight viewpoints of the site were chosen, assessed and the details given in the following text. For each viewpoint a photograph has been printed, alongside a map of the area with a red arrow indicating the location and direction the photograph was taken.

The Site location on the OS map is shown as a blue rectangle.

Viewpoint 1



Location: Boundary of the field and garden to the North of the Site looking South East.

Distance: 130 m approx.

Visibility: The Proposed Houses will be clearly visible from this location.

Sensitivity: High for visual receptors in the garden of property.

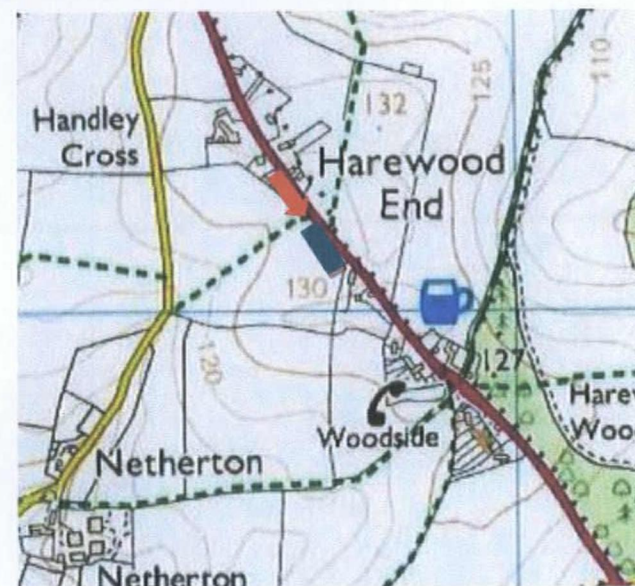
Impact: Intrusion & obstruction.

Magnitude: Substantial.

Impacts Construction: The construction phase will be clearly visible.

Impacts Completion: Proposed dwellings will be clearly visible from this location although hedge & tree planting will provide some screening.

Viewpoint 2



Location: Photo taken from the footpath adjacent to the hedge on the A49 boundary looking South East.

Distance: 5 m approx.

Visibility: The proposed housing will dominate this view.

Sensitivity: High for the visual receptors on the footpath.

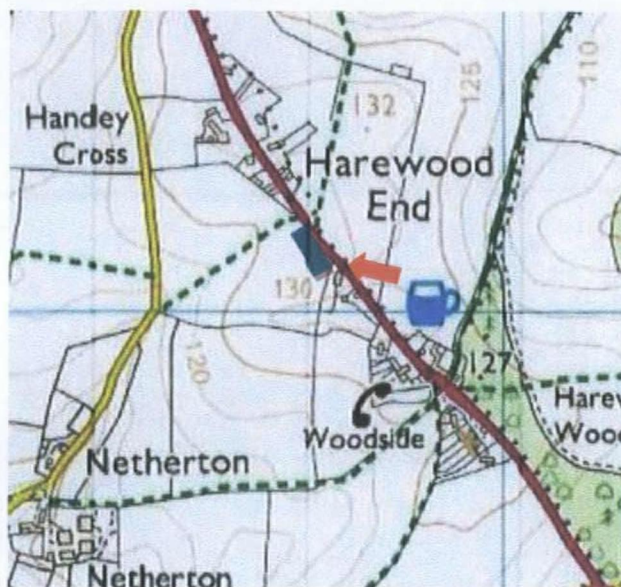
Impact: Obstruction & intrusion.

Magnitude: Substantial

Impacts Construction: Construction phase will dominate this view.

Impacts Completion: Despite proposed hedge planting the Houses will be dominant from this viewpoint. The development will be perceived as a continuation of the Village along the A49.

at 3



on: Looking West from the A49.

Distance: 10 m approx.

ty: The development will be visible. Existing hedge will partially screen the houses.

ivity: High for pedestrians on the footpath adjacent to the A49 and moderate for visual receptors in vehicles.

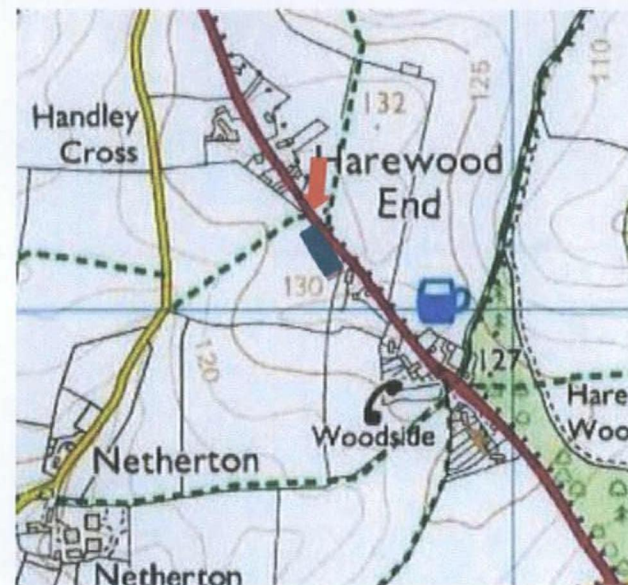
: Obstruction & intrusion.

tude: Moderate

s **Construction:** Construction will be visible from this location.

s **Completion:** The development will be prominent from this viewpoint however retention of the existing hedge will provide partial screening.

Viewpoint 4



Location: Looking South from the A49 & adjacent footpath.

Distance: 15m approx.

Visibility: The development will be clearly visible from this location.

Sensitivity: High from visual receptors on the footpath and A49.

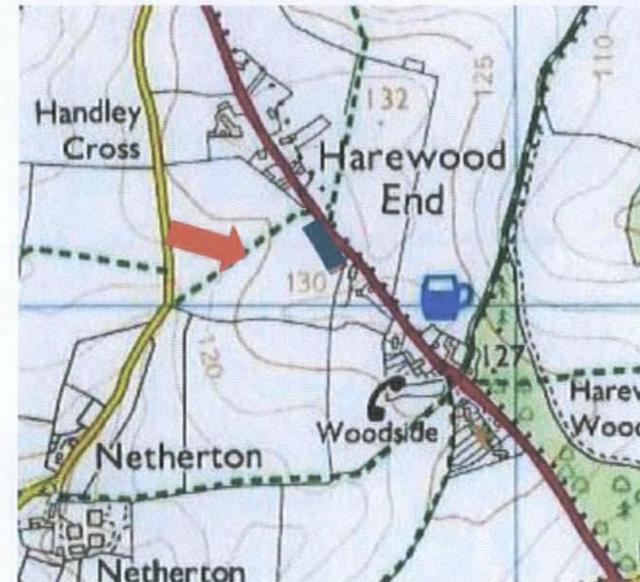
Impact: Obstruction & intrusion.

Magnitude: Moderate.

Impacts Construction: Construction will be clearly visible from this location.

Impacts Completion: The development will be clearly visible from this location with intermittent views through the retained existing hedge.

Viewpoint 5



Location: Looking South East from the public footpath up slope towards Site.

Distance: 80 m approx.

Visibility: The development will be clearly visible from this location.

Sensitivity: High for the visual receptors on the footpath.

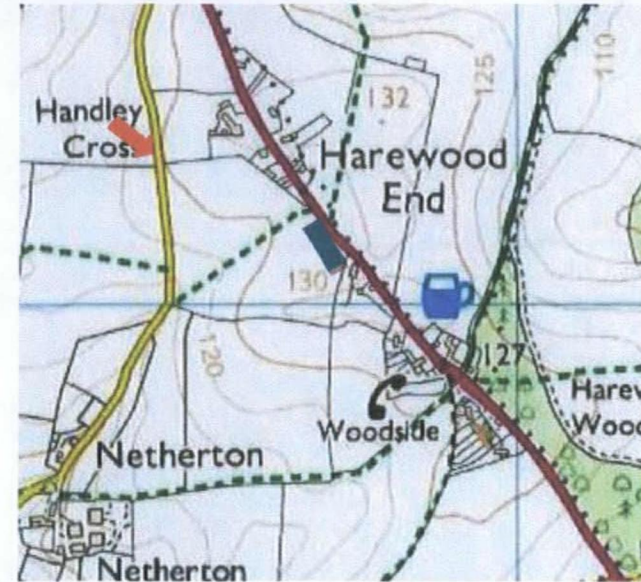
Impact: Intrusion.

Magnitude: Moderate.

Impacts Construction: Construction phase will be clearly visible from this view point.

Impacts Completion: Proposed housing will form a visual continuation of the existing Village from this point. There will be some screening from proposed hedge planting.

Viewpoint 6



Location: Looking South East through the gate on Netherton Lane.

Distance: 500 m approx.

Visibility: The proposed housing will be visible from this point.

Sensitivity: Medium for visual receptors on the Lane.

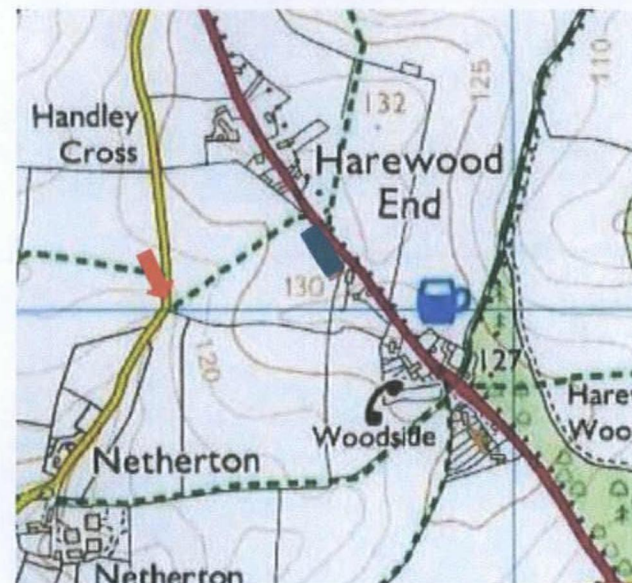
Impact: Intrusion.

Magnitude: Moderate.

Impacts Construction: Construction will be visible from this viewpoint.

Impacts Completion: The introduction of housing on the Site will form a continuation of Harewood End village which is partially visible from this location.

Viewpoint 7



Location: On the Lane to Netherton looking South.

Distance: 800 m approx.

Visibility: There will be intermittent glimpses of the Site from this location.

Sensitivity: Low for visual receptors on the Lane.

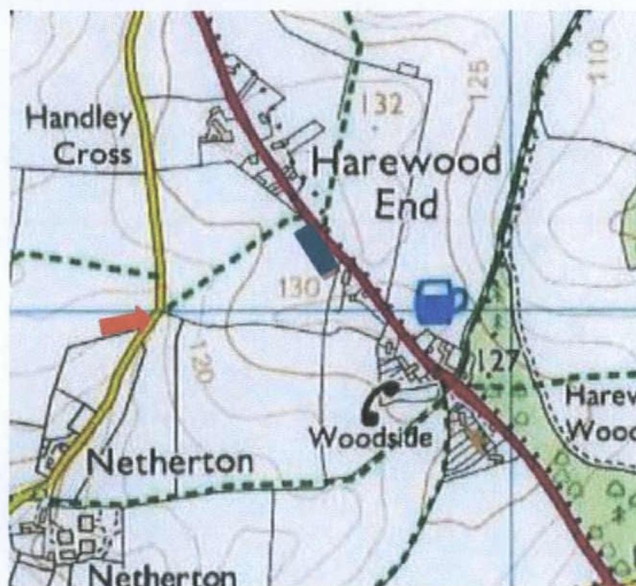
Impact: Intrusion.

Magnitude: Slight.

Impacts Construction: Possible glimpses of the construction phase from this location.

Impacts Completion: Only glimpses from this location of the proposed houses.

Viewpoint 8



Location: Looking South through hedge gap for footpath style.

Distance: 600m approx.

Visibility: Once the hedge is clipped there will be a glimpse of the Site.

Sensitivity: Medium.

Impact: Moderate.

Magnitude: Slight.

Impacts Construction: Limited views of construction from this location.

Impacts Completion: Limited views of the development from this location which is lower down the slope than the houses. The existing hedge also creates an effective screen.

4. NATURE OF IMPACTS

4.1 Potential Construction Impacts

Construction impacts will be caused by the use of plant and machinery on the proposal site. It is not considered that there will be considerable landscape impacts, as the landscape features such as trees and hedgerows will be protected and retained.

Landscape impacts are considered to be generally neutral or beneficial as landscape features retained and enhanced.

Removal of existing Features

The only features of note to be removed are the pasture and approximately 8m of the existing hedgerow along the Northern boundary of the Site to create an access.

Addition of new features

The two proposed dwellings with associated garages and gardens will be the most notable addition. There will also be new tree planting, and hedging associated with the development.

Changes in Landscape character

The proposed development is not considered out of character with the nearby land uses in particular with the existing Village. However, the character of the proposal site will change from an area of open agricultural land to residential.

Changes in views

It is considered that changes in views will be predominantly in those areas closest to the site, within 1 km particularly those from the A49. However the impact will be intermittent, with views towards the site screened by trees and hedgerows.

Duration of impact

Construction impacts are considered to be temporary in nature. Once the proposed planting has matured, all other impacts are deemed to be permanent.

4.2 Magnitude & Significance

The magnitude of landscape effects was assessed against the criteria set out in table 4 in appendix 1. Methodology.

Matrix of Magnitude & Significance of Landscape Impacts

The magnitude of a landscape impact is judged on the number of receptors affected and the degree to which they would be affected. Magnitude does not make a judgement on whether the impact is positive or negative.

Matrix of Magnitude & significance of Visual impacts

Judgement of the magnitude of visual impacts is based on the extent of views affected, the amount of the source of the impact that is visible, distance to the source and whether the view is transient for example from a moving vehicle.

The magnitude of change will vary depending on the viewpoint. From some locations the site will have little or no impact due to the lack of visibility caused by the site's location. Other viewpoints, where the site is clearly visible, the magnitude of the impact will be significantly higher.

Magnitude is a judgement on whether an impact is negative or positive, merely the scale of that impact. The Magnitude of the visual impacts have been assessed against table 5 in Appendix 1.

Significance

Significance is a combination of the magnitude and the sensitivity of the receptor. However because magnitude is not a judgement on the positive or negative nature of the impact, the significance cannot be a judgement either.

The judgement on the significance of landscape and visual impacts can be derived from Table 6 in Appendix 1.

Impact	Sensitivity	Nature of effect	Degree to which the receptor is affected.	Impact	Magnitude	Significance
Hedgerow.	High	The existing hedgerow is to be protected during the build and maintained after development.	The quality of the existing hedgerow will be improved with additional planting .	Beneficial.	Slight	Minor
Trees	Medium	There are no trees within the site and any trees on the boundary are to be protected with a root protection zone. New tree planting is proposed within the site.	The significant boundary trees are to be retained and there will be an increase in trees on the site.	Beneficial	Slight	Minor
Field pattern	Medium	The proposals do not affect the field pattern.	The site is considered too small to affect field patterns.	Beneficial	Negligible	Negligible
Landscape character	High	The site is located in an area of mixed agricultural land, which contributes positively to Landscape character.	It is considered that the proposed development will be in context with the nearby farm buildings.	Neutral	Slight	Minor
Insensitive development	Very low	The proposed development will be well designed and landscaped to complement the existing landscape character.	The proposed site is small compared with the existing extent of agricultural buildings and will be partially screened from important viewpoints.	Neutral	Moderate	Moderate

Table 2 – Matrix of Magnitude & Significance of Landscape Impacts

5. SUMMARY

5.1 Mitigation & Enhancement

The following matrix contains the most significantly adverse potential impacts and proposed mitigation to offset, reduce or overcome these impacts. The table only includes the impacts which were considered to be adverse in nature and of a predicted significance greater than minor.

View no.	Receptor	Description	Significance	Proposed Mitigation
4	Pedestrians and those in vehicles on the A49 looking South.	Intrusion	Moderate	Retention and protection of existing hedgerow.
5	Pedestrians on the footpath looking South up the Site.	Intrusion	Moderate	Proposed hedge planting on the Site boundary and tree planting in proposed garden.

Table 3 – Matrix of Mitigation for Adverse Impacts

5.2 Conclusion of Mitigation

The Herefordshire Council 'Landscape Character Assessment' recommends within its 'Management guidelines and Environmental Mitigation' for 'Sandstone Farmlands' that the hedgerow patterns are conserved and enhanced. The proposed tree and hedge planting within the site and with retention of existing trees and hedgerows around the site, will follow these guidelines by conserving and enhancing existing landscape characteristics. Proposed planting of trees and hedges on the development will enhance the existing landscape. The existing tree and hedgerow protection during construction should comply with the BS5837:2012 paragraph 6.2.

6. CONCLUSION

From the Site visit and the Assessment it can be concluded that the proposed development will have a Theoretical zone of visual influence that covers the immediate locality within 800m of the Site boundary, there are limited long distance viewpoints. This is due to the existing built form of the Village and topography restricting medium and longer distance views from the North, South and East. Existing Mature hedgerows are a significant Landscape feature limiting the views onto the Site from all points of the Compass.

The theoretical zone of visual influence for the development covers an area up to **500m** from the site and therefore visual impacts of substantial significance have been predicted from areas in the immediate vicinity of the housing site. The magnitude and therefore the significance of impacts are reduced over **500m** from the site.

The proposed residential development will form a continuation of Harewood End adjacent to existing properties along the A49. Proposed hedge planting will create partial screening of the Site from viewpoints to the North and West. Retention of the existing hedge along the A49 will also help screen the Site from viewpoints to the East.

The mitigation proposals, tree and hedge planting around the Site, will help to screen the houses from sensitive viewpoints and help blend the development into the existing Landscape. The Wye Valley AONB is not within the Theoretical Zone of Visual influence. Views from the AONB are restricted by topography and existing hedgerows reducing the impact on this important Landscape.

References

LI /IEMA. (2013) 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' Third Edition.

'Landscape Character Assessment' SPG-2004 updated 2009, Herefordshire Council.

Natural England NCA 100 'Herefordshire Lowlands' Key Facts and Data.

APPENDIX 1 – Methodology

This report has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines as set out in “Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment: Second Edition”, (GLVIA) published by the Landscape Institute (LI) and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA). This is widely regarded by professionals as the industry standard on the subject.

The assessment distinguishes between landscape impacts and visual impacts which, although related, are different. Landscape impacts are changes in the fabric, character and quality of the landscape. Visual impacts relate solely to changes in available views of the landscape and the effects of those changes on people. Impacts can be beneficial as well as adverse.

A desktop study of the site was undertaken, including an assessment of character, landform, landscape features, historic evolution, policy and designations. This information was both used for, and assessed against, the site visit.

The area around the site was visited, including strategic viewpoints from roads and Public Rights of Way (PRoW). These view points are described in Section 3 of the Assessment.

Definition of the study area

A thorough inspection of the site was undertaken to determine the Theoretical Zone of Visual Influence (TZVI), which involved walking Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and visiting significant public viewpoints to determine the likely visibility of the development. Photographs from selected viewpoints were taken. The viewpoints chosen are not intended to be exhaustive but rather to build up a picture of the areas from which the proposed development is potentially visible.

Photographs were taken at a focal length of 35mm (equivalent to 50mm on a convention 35mm camera), to create the view which is generally accepted as being closest to that seen by the human eye. The photographs used are intended only to give an indication of the view discussed and are not a substitute for visiting the site in person.

Due to the infinite number of possible viewpoints to choose from, those chosen were done so on the basis of their location in relation to the site and landform. These were further reduced to concentrate on those receptors that were identified as being of 'high' or 'very high' sensitivity. Beyond the area chosen, the visual impacts of the development are not considered likely to be significant. At these distances, the development is likely to be screened by local features, such as landform, buildings and vegetation or become a recessive element within the landscape.

A brief description of the existing land use of the area is provided and includes reference to existing settlements, transport routes and vegetation cover, as well as local landscape designations, elements of cultural and heritage value and local landmarks or tourist destinations.

These factors combine to provide an understanding of landscape value and sensitivity, and an indication of particular key views and viewpoints that are available to visual receptors and therefore are to be included in the visual assessment.

Category	Definition
Highest Quality Landscape	Includes the most aesthetically attractive landscape. Areas of particular Natural Beauty perceived as special in a regional context. Nationally, designated land such as National Parks, AONBs etc.
Very Attractive Landscape	Areas include historic and designated landscape. Diverse, semi-natural or farmed landscape with natural features. Normally abundant woodland cover together with a high distribution of trees, hedgerows and shrubs, streams, brooks and other naturalized unpolluted water corridors may be present. Several local landscape designations may apply including Conservation Areas, and some historical or cultural sites may be present.
Good Quality Landscape	Countryside with some variety in farmland cover. Settlements and villages with pockets of open space and public recreation areas. There is a reasonable distribution of semi-natural vegetation, trees and shrub cover and the overall view of the area is pleasant. Local landscape designations of cultural and historic value may be present.
Ordinary Quality Landscape	Typical open agricultural land where attractive features are offset by detractors. Some strategic planning is evident but development is primarily functional including housing estates, business parks or urban fringe land uses. Not particularly aesthetically attractive, but with more value than a poor quality landscape. Land may be within a Green Belt or have a local landscape designation.
Poor Quality Landscape	Includes detractors such as power lines, industrial derelict or inappropriate built forms with no aesthetic value or evidence of strategic planning. There is lack of mature vegetation cover and no landscape designations apply. Intensively farmed landscape, which has lost much of its features.

Table 1 – Landscape Character Assessment Criteria

In conjunction with other development (associated or separate from it), or actions that occurred in the past, present or are likely to occur in the foreseeable future.

The landscape impacts have been assessed by consideration of three criteria:

1. The sensitivity of the landscape resource or receptor (see table 1)
2. The magnitude of the affected landscape resource (see table 3)
3. The significance of the impact (see matrix 4)

Consideration of the sensitivity of the landscape receptor against the magnitude of change posed by the development to give the significance of the impact is fundamental to landscape assessment and each of these criteria has been defined in more detail with relevance to this assessment.

Landscape Impacts and Receptors

Landscape impacts are defined by the Landscape Institute as 'changes to landscape elements, characteristics, character, and qualities of the landscape as a result of development' and these may be adverse, neutral or beneficial. Landscape receptors are things that are affected by landscape impacts and may include the following:

- **Landscape elements** introduction or removal of trees, vegetation and built features and other elements which together form landscape patterns;
- **Landscape patterns:** degradation or erosion of groups and arrangements of landscape elements, which form patterns that are characteristic of landscape character types;
- **Landscape character:** the landscape character is a product of a combination of factors that contribute to the creation of a unique setting. Landscape character is a product of the combination of geological features, geomorphic processes, floral and wildlife associations, with social, economic and cultural forces
- **Cumulative landscape impacts:** these are defined by the Landscape Institute as resulting from additional changes to landscape amenity caused by the proposed development conjunction with other development (associated or separate from it), or actions that occurred in the past, present or are likely to occur in the foreseeable future.

The landscape impacts have been assessed by consideration of three criteria:

1. The **sensitivity** of the landscape resource or receptor (*Very High, High, Medium, Low, Very Low*) (see table 1)
2. The **magnitude** of the affected landscape resource (*Severe, Substantial, Moderate, Slight, Negligible, None*) (see table 3)
3. The **significance** of the impact (*Severe, Substantial, Moderate, Minor, Negligible, None*) (see matrix 4)

Consideration of the sensitivity of the landscape receptor against the magnitude of change posed by the development to give the significance of the impact is fundamental to landscape assessment and each of these criteria has been defined in more detail with relevance to this assessment.

Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors

The sensitivity of landscape receptors have been determined by reference to the baseline assessment of the existing landscape and are classified as very high, high, medium, low or very low. The classification of sensitivity with regard to landscape receptors is defined further in table 3 and is derived from consideration of the existing (baseline) landscape receptors as follows:

1. **Landscape Condition:** the state of repair of the elements of a particular landscape, the integrity and intactness and the extent to which its distinct character is apparent.
2. **Landscape Value:** the importance attached to a landscape or its elements. This is most readily recognized by the existence of any planning policy designations. These may express national or local consensus, and generally reflect aspects of its quality, cultural associations, scenic or aesthetic characteristics or ecological state. The rarity of the landscape or its particular representation of a certain landscape character may also be considered.
3. **Landscape Capacity:** the ability of a particular landscape element to absorb change without unacceptable adverse effects on its character. This may be considered with reference to existing landscape characteristics such as scale, topography and existing screening elements as well as landscape change, including the presence of existing development. Generally speaking, landscapes that are already influenced by the type of development proposed have a greater capacity to accommodate the proposed changes, whilst those lacking any influence from similar development will have less capacity.

It is important to use sensitivity criteria of an appropriate scale for the development. In some cases where criteria are chosen to reflect nationally sensitive sites, such as designated National Parks or Areas of Outstanding National Beauty, it is possible that issues of local importance are under emphasized. The opposite is also true. If the highest significance is assigned to nationally designated landscapes and the study area falls within one, there is the assumption that all of the land within that study area is of the highest sensitivity to change. This is not the case as many designations, such as AONBs, are broad-brush and the sensitivity criteria should be altered accordingly. Sensitivity criteria should be reviewed on a case by case basis.

Landscape Receptor Categories	Scale	Sensitivity	Typical Examples
High importance and rarity. No, or limited, potential for substitution.	International / National	Very High	World Heritage Sites, National Parks, AONB
High importance and rarity. Limited potential for substitution.	National	High	National Park, AONB
Medium Importance and rarity. Limited potential for substitution	Regional / Local	Medium	Un-designated but value perhaps through non-official publication or demonstrable use. Also includes elements such as hedgerows and trees.
Low importance or rarity	Local	Low	Area / elements identified as having some redeeming feature or features and possibly identified for improvement
Very Low importance or rarity	Local	Very Low	Areas / elements identified for recovery

Table 2 – Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors

Visual Effects and Receptors

Visual effects are concerned wholly with the effect of the development on views, and general visual amenity of people who have (or will have) views of the development. Visual effects may include the following:

1. **Visual Obstruction:** physical blocking of view
2. **Visual Intrusion:** the visual intrusion of the proposed development into an existing view or loss of particular landscape element or features already present in the view.
3. **Cumulative visual effects:** the cumulative or incremental visibility of similar types of development may combine to have cumulative visual effect, this may concern intervisibility where more than one development may be viewed simultaneously from a viewpoint, or occur sequentially where developments may be viewed from a number of differing locations, most commonly from a road, rail route or long distance path.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

Based on the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), the different receptor categories are ranked in order of their sensitivity to visual effects as set out in Table 3. It should be stressed that this table is not indicative only as it would be impossible to rigidly tabulate sensitivity to change.

Category	Sensitivity
Including viewer within nationally designated townscape features (such as the setting of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). Users of such areas are often very aware of the value of views.	Very High
Including viewers looking from windows of their own residential properties or recreational viewers using public rights of way or the setting of Grade II* listed building	High
Including views from people engaged in outdoor sports or recreation. Such users are not wholly focused on the landscape routes.	Medium
Including people with cars and on other transport routes.	Low
Including people working inside who are not focused on views outside.	Very Low

Table 3 – Sensitivity of Visual Receptor

Magnitude of Landscape Effects

Magnitude of landscape impact is a function of the following factors:

1. **The nature** of the effect
2. **The degree** of change to the landscape element, taking into account the proposed mitigation measure. The overall effect on the landscape receptor can range from degradation to enhancement.

Predicted Landscape Effects	Magnitude
Total loss of, or major alterations to, key elements / features characteristics of the landscape or introduction of elements considered to make major changes to the receiving landscape.	Severe
Significant loss of, or alteration to, key elements / features / characteristics of the landscape or introduction of elements considered to make significant changes within the receiving landscapes.	Substantial
Partial loss of, or alteration to, key elements / features characteristics of the landscape or introduction of elements that may be prominent within the receiving landscape.	Moderate
Minor loss of, or alteration to, key elements / features characteristics of the landscape or introduction of elements that may be prominent within the receiving landscape.	Slight
Very minor loss of, or alteration to, key elements / features characteristics of the landscape or introduction of elements that are noticeable within the receiving landscape.	Negligible
No loss of, or alteration to, key elements / features characteristics of the landscape and no introduction of features	None

Table 4 – Magnitude of Landscape Effects

Magnitude of Visual Effects

Magnitude of visual impact is a function of the following factors:

1. **The distance** from receptor to source
2. **The nature** of the effect (obstruction intrusion, cumulative)
3. **The degree** of change to the existing view caused by the construction of an intrusive feature or the obstruction or modification of an existing view, taking into account the agreed mitigation measures. The overall effect upon visual amenity can range from degradation to enhancement.

It is important to note that magnitude is not a judgment on whether the impact is positive or negative.

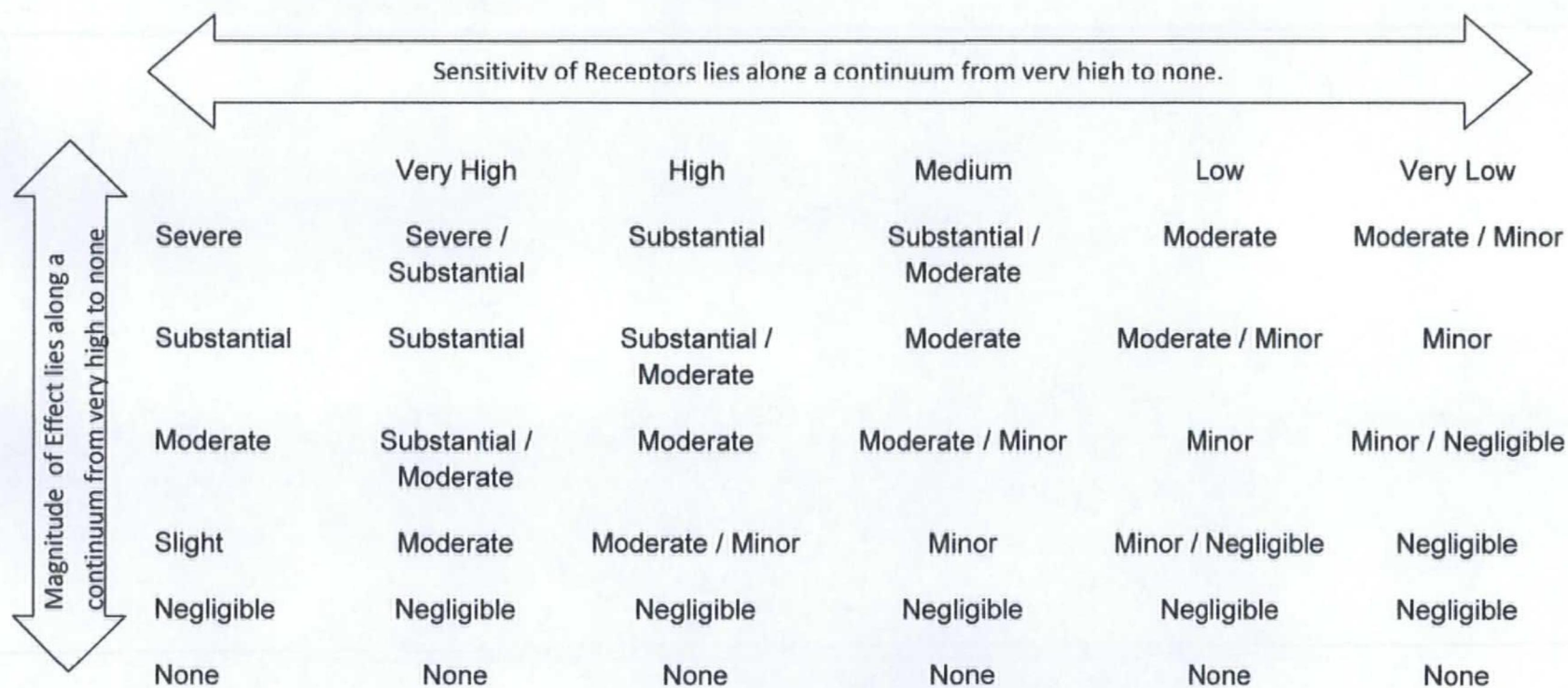
Predicted Visual Effects	Magnitude
The proposals become the dominant feature of the scene to which other elements become subordinate and they significantly affect and change its character.	Severe
The proposals form a significant and immediately apparent part of the scene that affects and changes its overall character.	Substantial
The proposals may form a visible and recognizable new element within the overall scene and may be readily noticed by the observer or receptor.	Moderate
The proposals constitute only a minor component of the wider view, which might be missed by the casual observer or receptor. Awareness of the proposals would not have a marked effect on the overall quality of the scene.	Slight
Only a very small part of the proposals is discernible and / or they are at such a distance that they are scarcely appreciated. Consequently, they have very little effect on the scene.	Negligible
No part of the development is discernible.	None

Table 5 – Magnitude of Visual Effects

Significance

The two main criteria that determine significance are **magnitude of the effect** and the **sensitivity of the location or the receptor**. Significance varies from site to site and the criteria need to be adjusted in each case. It is worth noting that a higher level of significance is generally given to large scale effects and effects on sensitive locations. This means that small effects on sensitive areas are usually more important than large effects on less sensitive areas.

Significance is a combination of the **magnitude** and the **sensitivity**. However, magnitude is not a judgment on the positive or negative nature of the impact and therefore significance cannot be such a judgment either.



		Sensitivity of Receptors lies along a continuum from very high to none.				
		Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
Magnitude of Effect lies along a continuum from very high to none	Severe	Severe / Substantial	Substantial	Substantial / Moderate	Moderate	Moderate / Minor
	Substantial	Substantial	Substantial / Moderate	Moderate	Moderate / Minor	Minor
	Moderate	Substantial / Moderate	Moderate	Moderate / Minor	Minor	Minor / Negligible
	Slight	Moderate	Moderate / Minor	Minor	Minor / Negligible	Negligible
	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
	None	None	None	None	None	None

Table 6 – Significance Definition