



121 Nash Grove Lane, Wokingham, Berkshire

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)

Ref: 431/LVIA/MP/17.04.25/v1.0



Architecture and Design

121 Nash Grove Lane, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG40 4HG
Landscaping and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)

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1. Non- technical Summary and Overview

The aim of a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is to provide an assessment of the potential landscape and visual effects of a development upon the receiving landscape, in line with current legislation and guidance. It comprises two assessments, the first for **landscape** and the second for **visual effects**.

The assessment has been conducted in line with published best practice guidelines and is [proportionate to the scale and size of the project proposed. Hence, this LVIA, for the demolition of existing the existing dwelling and associated outbuildings and replacement with a single family dwelling is of relatively limited scope focussing upon perceived harm to the countryside. We set out below the two main criteria assessed, 'Landscape effects' and 'Visual effects'.](#)

1 Landscape effects

We derive and assess changes in the physical landscape relating to the development which may give rise to changes in its character and how this is experienced, including:

- direct impacts upon specific landscape elements within and adjacent to the site.
- effects on the overall pattern of the landscape elements which give rise to the landscape character of the site and its surroundings; and
- impacts upon any special interests in and around the site.

Visual effects

We derive and assess changes that arise in the composition of available views because of changes to the landscape, to people's responses to the changes and to the overall effects with the respect of visual amenity, including:

- direct impacts of the development upon views in the landscape; and overall impact on visual amenity.

1.1 The proposed works

The proposed works include the demolition of the existing dwelling and outbuildings and construction of a detached replacement dwelling, within an enclosed area of grassland, at the edge of the semi-rural village of Finchampstead. A detailed assessment of the design strategy is contained with the 'Planning, Design and Access Statement' Ref 431/DAS which forms part of this submission.

The site and its surrounding landscape were assessed on several occasions during the Spring, Summer, Autumn of 2024 and Spring of 2025.

2. Site Description

2.1 Finchampstead

The plot is located on the northern edge of Finchampstead in the District of Wokingham, Berkshire .

Finchampstead has a rich history of continual settlement stretching back to the Iron Age. During the medieval period, this area was part of The Royal Forest of Windsor. This was enclosed in the early half of the 19th century and the last remnants of heaths were replaced by plantations. The remaining open farmland was broken up into small units in the second half of the 20th century. There remain a small number of farms in the parish, some with livestock, agriculture, or specialist fruit-growing capability but others given over to paddock land.

The parish is mainly residential, farmland, woodland and nature reserve, giving it a natural or rural character, although there is a light industrial estate in Hogwood Lane. Around the north-western, western, and southern edges of the parish, there are still broad areas of farmland and open space offering recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike along the parishes' 34kms (21 miles) of footpaths, bridleways, byways and cycle paths.

To the north lie tree and hedge lined fields and to the east Sand Martins golf course. Further afield lies California Country Park and large areas of woodland and farmland. The Waverley Prep School and Nursery is just to the north-east, at the northern end of Waverley Way.

The surrounding context comprises residential development and open space. There are residential properties to the north, south on both sides of Nash Grove Lane, but none that would be materially affected by the proposal. The existing property is accessed via Nash Grove Lane, which connects to Barkham Ride.

Within the immediate surrounding area there are plots and gardens of differing sizes and building styles.

Immediately to the west, adjoining the rear garden lies Rooks Nest Wood Country Park (RNWC), which contains areas of grassland, woodland and wetland. There is a circular footpath within the RNWC, which in part, runs close to the western boundary of the plot owned by the applicant. Two of the Receptor locations/assessments were located on this foot path.

No 121 NGL comprises a single detached residential dwelling with a front and rear garden, opening on to an area of open grassland with a dense screen of mature trees and planting, along all boundaries. The outbuildings, within the existing garden curtilage, include a detached double garage, a swimming pool with enclosure, a summer house and a shed.

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Site Location : Aerial Photograph (Source: Google Maps 2023)

The front garden and rear gardens are accessed via a driveway that extends from Nash Grove Lane, between adjoining properties, bounded by timber fencing and mature planting. There is therefore little visibility of the site from Nash Grove Lane.

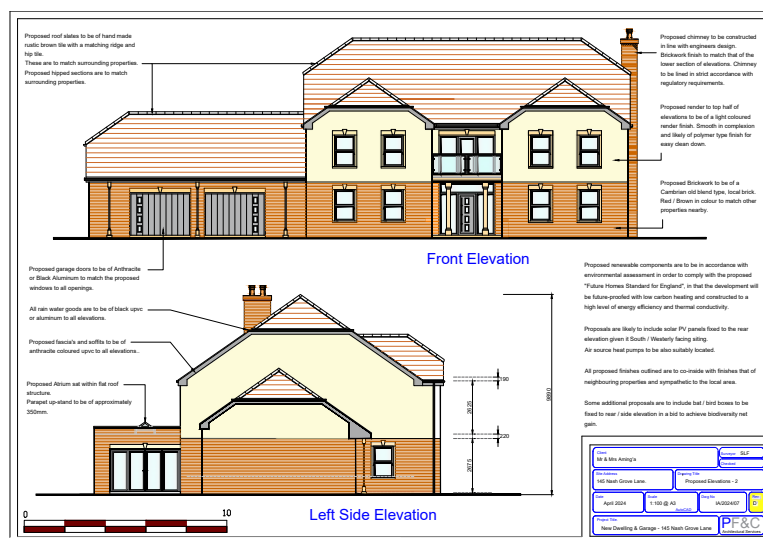
2.2 Plot setting and boundary conditions

Immediately abutting the site to the east is 117 Nash Grove Lane, a 1.5 story detached dwelling with detached double garage and accessed directly off NGL.

To the north is 123A NGL, which has a recently consented two-storey extension currently under construction. It is accessed directly off NGL via a long drive, in a similar fashion to the applicant plot. Similarly, it also has a large area of grassland to the west of the residential curtilage extending to a densely wooded area, which then abuts the RNWC. To the south, are 111A and 113 NGL, both two-storey modern, brick and tile dwellings.

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To the east is 117 NGL, is a 1.5storey dwelling, accessed directly off NGL.



Recently Consented Replacement Dwelling at 145 Nash Grove Lane

Further to the north, at 145 Nash Grove Lane, an application for a replacement dwelling was recently granted under PP/240972. The design is over two storeys with a limited area of single storey (garage) and a maximum ridge height of the dwelling is 9.890m.

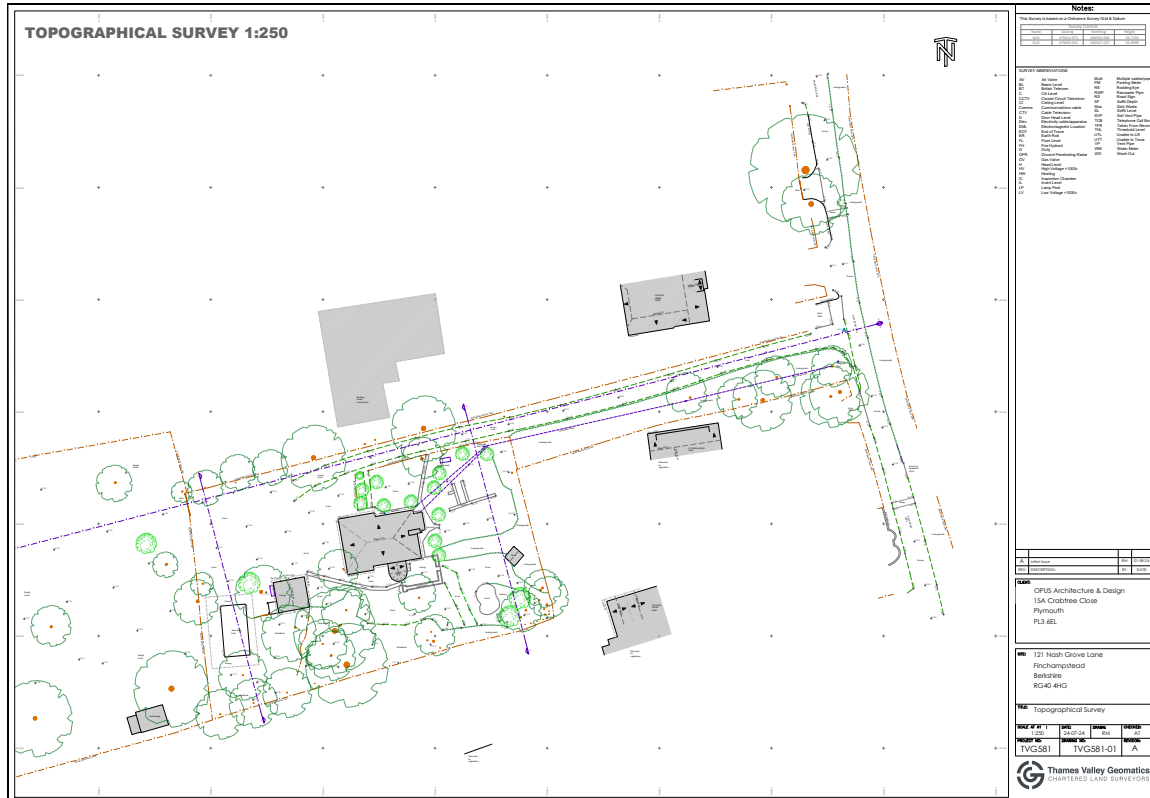
To the west of the application site is an area of open area of grassland, which is the ownership of the Applicant, and an area of densely planted woodland, which screens the land and properties. To the north, south and east, the timber fence boundaries with mature, dense hedgerows and trees, screen the site from all viewpoints.

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) conducted by by **AA Environmental Ltd, conducted on 17th February 2025** describes the site in detail, including an analysis of the nature, quality and species identification.

However, in summary, the site and boundary conditions as follows:

“An enclosed area managed garden adjoining an open area of grassland is substantially screened by mature, dense hedgerows on all boundaries, as identified and recorded on the Topographic site survey and site sections.”

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Topographic Measured Survey supplied by Thames Valley Geomatics Ltd

2.3 Topography and Ground Levels

The site is predominantly level with the eastern boundary being circa rising circa 1.0m across over a length of circa 120m, east to west across the site.

The highest point of the site occurs in the south-eastern corner, at this point the ground level is 57.74m; it then falls away, in a steady incline, to 56.74m, this being the lowest point in the north-easterly corner of the site, at the junction with the drive and NGL. This is an overall fall of 1.0m. Further detail on the precise topography and landscape character of the surrounding area maybe found within the Design and Access Statement (DAS) and the Ecology PEA.

2.4 Conservation Areas (CA)

The does not fall within a Conservation Area (CA).

2.5 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The site does not fall within a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

2.6 Public Rights of Way, Bridlepaths and Footpaths.

There are no PRow, Bridlepaths or footpaths running through or across the plot.



Plate showing relationship of proposed siting of replacement dwelling with surrounding properties.

However, there is a footpath which runs through the Rooks Nest Wood Park to the West off the plot. Two of the 4 receptor locations were selected to show the views from this public footpath, however as the above plate clearly demonstrates, there are no views through to the plot due to the dense nature of the woodland.

3. Methodology, Legislation and Policy Context

3.1 Assessment Methodology and Certainty

As a matter of best practice, the assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the methods outlined in the following guidance:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition), published by the Landscape Institute and the IEMA (2013) (GLVIA); and
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment, published by Natural England (2014).

The assessment has been based on a desk-based review of relevant published guidance, including legislation and policy, baseline information production, and information followed by several detailed site appraisals, including:

1. An Arboricultural Tree Survey and Schedule by Marcus Welby Ltd dated 17th December forms part of the planning submission.
2. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) has been prepared by AA Environmental Ltd dated 4th April 2025, which includes a survey and assessment of Protected species, landscaping and mitigation/recommendations for planting and habitat enhancement. The PEA forms part of this application.
3. Topographic Measured Survey supplied by Thames Valley Geometrics Ltd, including the site, adjoining properties, roads, lanes, footpaths, and site sections.

The prediction and extent of effect cannot always be absolute. It is for each assessment to determine the assessment criteria and the significance thresholds, using informed and well-reasoned professional judgement supported by thorough justification for their selection, and explanation as to how the conclusions about significance for each effect assessed have been derived, as noted in GLVIA 3rd edition para 2.23-2.26 and 3.32-36.

In this instance the scale of the development, located within an open area of grassland and screened by dense, mature, boundary planting site suggests that the LVIA should be proportionate to the scale of the proposed development; this methodology is supported at local and national level. As such, **we have focussed on the sensitivity of the receiving landscape and visual receptors, the magnitude of change associated with the project and the visual context of the study area.**

3.2 Landscape Planning Policies

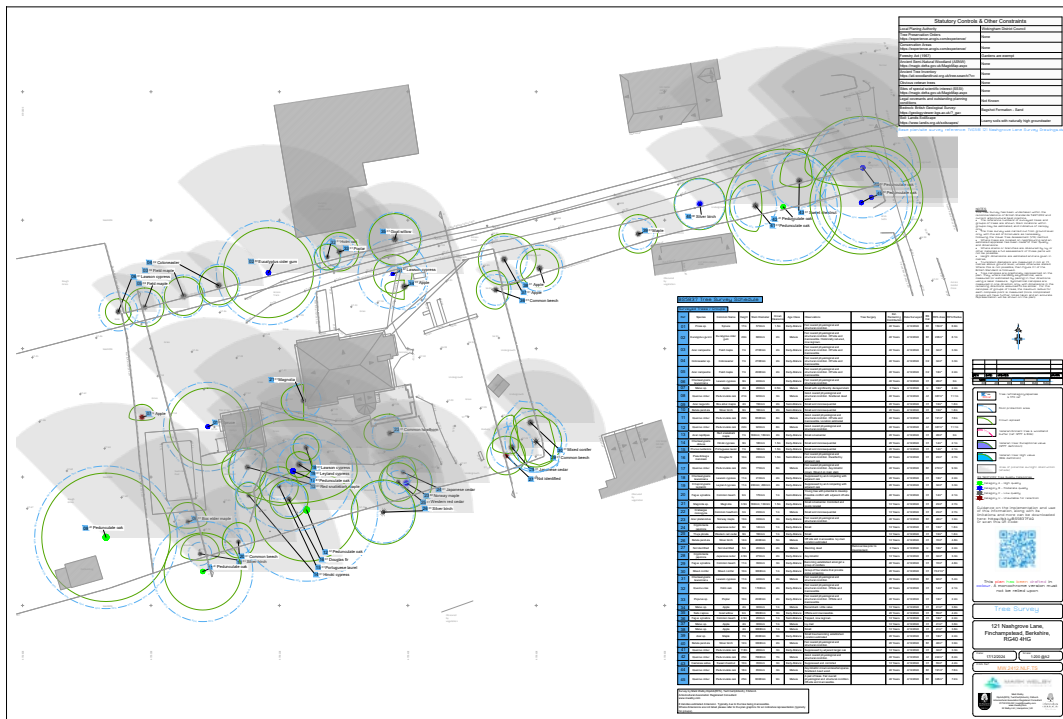
Guidelines, legislation and planning policy documents provide the framework for the protection and conservation of landscape within the study area. Statutes exist to ensure both direct and indirect protection of our most valued and important landscapes, their intrinsic visual qualities and the individual elements and components that constitute their appeal. Those with direct relevance to the assessment comprise the following:

- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000;

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- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981;
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990;
- Hedgerow Regulations 1997;
- Environment Act 1995;
- Countryside Act 1968; and
- The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development**, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.



Arboricultural Tree Survey and Schedule by Marcus Welby Ltd dated 17th December

4.0 Landscape Character and Visual Assessment Criteria

4.1 Landscape Character Assessment Criteria

Description and classification of existing landscape character has involved a review of published regional and sub-regional landscape character assessment information. Local landscape character and landscape sensitivity has been defined by taking account of landform, hydrology, vegetation, settlement, land use pattern, and cultural and historic features and associations, consequently the landscape character has been categorised as follows.

Quality

Quality or condition relates to the physical state of the landscape and its intactness from the visual, functional and ecological perspectives, together with the state of repair of its constituent features or elements (e.g. hedgerows, woodlands, field pattern etc.).

Local landscape quality within the study area, ie the Applicant Plot and immediate surrounding areas has been considered based on the criteria described in the following table.

Table 1. Landscape Value

Landscape Value	Typical Indicators
Very High	Areas comprising a clear composition of valued landscape components in robust form and health, free of disruptive visual detractors and with a strong sense of place. Areas containing a strong, balanced structure with distinct features worthy of conservation. Such areas would generally be internationally or nationally recognised designations, e.g. AONB or National Parks.
High	Areas primarily containing valued landscape components combined in an aesthetically pleasing composition and lacking prominent disruptive visual detractors. Areas containing a strong structure with noteworthy features or elements, exhibiting a sense of place. Such areas would generally be national statutorily designated areas. Such areas may also relate to the setting of internationally or nationally statutory designated areas, e.g., National Parks and may also relate to the setting of national statutorily designated areas, such as AONB.
Medium	Areas primarily of valued landscape components combined in an aesthetically pleasing composition with low levels of disruptive visual detractors, exhibiting a recognisable landscape structure. Such areas would generally be non-statutory locally designated areas such as Areas of Great Landscape Value.
Low	Areas containing some features of landscape value but lacking a coherent and aesthetically pleasing composition with frequent detracting visual elements, exhibiting a distinguishable structure often concealed by mixed land uses or development. Such areas would be commonplace at the local level and would generally be undesignated, offering scope for improvement.
Very Low	Areas lacking valued landscape components or comprising degraded, disturbed or derelict features, lacking any aesthetically pleasing composition with a dominance of visually detracting elements, exhibiting mixed land uses which conceal the baseline structure. Such areas would generally be restricted to the local level and identified as requiring recovery.

We assess that the applicant site, located on the outskirts of the village of Finchampstead, in a semi-rural location, but located within and surrounded by existing detached dwellings falls in to the 'medium' category of landscape value.

4.2 Visual Assessment Criteria

In conjunction with the landscape character impact assessment, a visual impact assessment has been undertaken.

To evaluate what the visual impact of the development will be it is necessary to describe the existing situation to provide a basis against which any change can be assessed. The assessment of visual impact from any one location considers the following:

- Sensitivity of the views and viewers (visual receptor) affected.
- Nature, scale or magnitude and duration of the change.
- Extent of the proposed development that will be visible.
- Degree of visual intrusion or obstruction that will occur.
- Distance of the view(s).
- Change in character or quality of the view compared to the existing.

Visual Receptors

The visual impact assessment considers the sensitivity to change of visual receptors within the study area, and the magnitude of change associated with the introduction of the proposed development.

A range of fixed visual receptors were considered, with emphasis placed on identification and selection of locations with a clear relationship to the proposed scheme where potential visual implications were deemed to be greatest. The key visual receptors normally include statutory and non-statutory designated or protected areas, cultural heritage resources, residential properties and farmsteads, recreational/tourist resources, panoramic hilltop views, focused or directed views, and cumulative views. Viewpoints were selected to be representative of these visual receptor types. Field investigation from the preliminary viewpoints was used to assess the actual visibility of the proposed development within the study area, considering the visual barrier effect of vegetation and buildings.

For the field assessment, a Canon EOS 700D camera with an 18-55mm lens was used, set at 35mm focal length. This is in line with best practice as shown in the Photography and photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment advice notes issued by the Landscape Institute (Advice note 01/11).

4.2 Site Appraisal/ Photographic Studies

The photographic study was undertaken in Summer/Autumn 2024 and Winter/Spring 2025. Viewpoints at varying distances from the site were selected to represent the typical views of the site. In determining the viewpoints, whether in the immediate locality or further away, the main public highways, sections of public footpaths, and some of the publicly available spaces were visited.

From the results of the initial desk study and the site appraisal we assess that the proposed development will only be visible from a very limited number of locations, at close distance, from public and private areas, namely, a glimpse view at the existing site entrance off Nash Grove Lane and glimpse views from the other adjoining properties. To evaluate what the visual impact of the development will be and, if appropriate, what can be done to ameliorate the impact, it is necessary to describe the existing situation to provide a basis against which any change can be assessed.

Each assessment of visual impact has therefore been made taking into consideration the character and quality of the existing view. The assessment of the significance of effect is a result of the assessment of magnitude of the impact related to the assessment of sensitivity of the receptor.

Visual Receptor Sensitivity

The locations from which the proposed development will be visible are known as visual receptors. In accordance with the “Guidelines for Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition”, for the purposes of the visual assessment the visual receptors have been graded according to their sensitivity to change.

The assessment of visual sensitivity considers both the category of visual receptor and the nature of their existing view. It takes account of the location of the receptor or viewpoint; the expectations, occupation or activity of the people present; the quality of the existing visual context; and the importance or value likely to be attributed by them to the available view.

It is therefore the case that not all receptors within a given category are deemed to display equal sensitivity.

Table 1: Visual Receptor sensitivity

Receptor Sensitivity	Description
High	Occupiers of residential properties. Users of outdoor recreational facilities, including public rights of way, whose attention or interest may be focused on the landscape. Communities where the development results in changes in the landscape setting or valued views enjoyed by the community.
Medium	People travelling through or past the affected landscape in cars, on trains or other transport routes where higher speeds are involved and views sporadic and short-lived. People engaged in outdoor recreation where enjoyment of the landscape is incidental rather than the main interest.
Low	People travelling through or past the affected landscape in cars, on trains or other transport routes where views would be ‘glimpse, sporadic and short-lived.

The number of people likely to be present and the duration of time is likely influencing the visual sensitivity of a particular location and it is sometimes the case that different categories of visual receptor might be present at a selected representative viewpoint (e.g. a selected location may include both residential properties and workplaces suggesting different levels of sensitivity).

We assess that the limited glimpse views of the proposed replacement dwelling, where there already exists a cluster of adjoining housing, with associated outbuildings, from the fixed visual receptors, in an area with limited distant view to fall within the 'LOW' Receptor Sensitivity range.

Visual Magnitude of Change: The visibility of the proposals, the magnitude of their change upon a view and the resulting significance of visual effect are dependent on the range of factors already outlined, together with the angle of the sun, the time of year and weather conditions. Of equal importance will be whether the site is seen completely, or in part; whether the site appears on the skyline; whether it is viewed with a backcloth of land or vegetation; or with a complex foreground; and whether the site forms part of an expansive landscape or is visible within a restricted view. The aspect of dwellings ie., whether viewed from a main window or secondary window, which may be used less frequently, is also a consideration. From highways, the direction and speed of travel are also a consideration. In the assessment magnitude of change is ranked in accordance with the follow table.

The design of the proposed development with the massing and the location of the buildings consistent with the character and of the buildings in the immediate vicinity would not result in a perceptible change to the existing views.

Table 2: Definition of Magnitude of Visual Impact

Magnitude	Examples
Very Large	The development would result in a dramatic change in the existing view and/or would cause a dramatic change in the quality and/or character of the view. The development would appear large scale and/or form the dominant elements within the overall view and/or may be in full view the observer or receptor. --Commanding, controlling the view.
Large	The development would result in a prominent change in the existing view and/or would cause a prominent change in the quality and/or character of the view. The development would form prominent elements within the overall view and/or may be easily noticed by the observer or receptor. --Standing out, striking, sharp, unmistakable, easily seen.
Medium	The development would result in a noticeable change in the existing view and/or would cause a noticeable change in the quality and/or character of the view. The development would form a conspicuous element within the overall view and/or may be readily noticed by the observer or receptor. --Noticeable, distinct, catching the eye or attention, clearly visible, well defined.
Small	The development would result in a perceptible change in the existing view, and/or without affecting the overall quality and/or character of the view. The development would form an apparent small element in the wider landscape that may be missed by the observer or receptor. --Visible, evident, obvious.
Very Small	The development would result in a barely perceptible change in the existing view, and/or without affecting the overall quality and/or character of the view. The development would form an inconspicuous minor element in the wider landscape that may be missed by the observer or receptor. --Lacking sharpness of definition, not obvious, indistinct, not clear, obscure, blurred, indefinite.
Negligible	Only a small part of the development would be discernible and/or it is at such a distance that no change to the existing view can be appreciated. --Weak, not legible, near limit of acuity of human eye.

We assess that the proposed development would fall in to the Magnitude category of 'Very Small'.

Significance of Visual Effect: The significance of the visual effects is determined by the assessment of receptor sensitivity set against the magnitude of change as indicated by the matrix in Table 4.

For the purposes of this assessment and with reference to the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011, 'Significant' landscape effects would be those effects assessed to be severe, major or major/moderate and are indicated by shading in the following table.

Table 3: Significance of Visual Effects

<i>Magnitude</i>	<i>Sensitivity</i>		
	<i>High</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Low</i>
<i>Very Large</i>	Major	Major	Major/moderate
<i>Large</i>	Major	Major/moderate	Moderate
<i>Medium</i>	Major/moderate	Moderate	Moderate/minor
<i>Small</i>	Moderate	Moderate/minor	Minor
<i>Very Small</i>	Minor	Minor	Negligible
<i>Negligible</i>	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

From the above Table of Significance of Visual Effects and the Magnitude and Sensitivity ratings previously described the impact of the proposed works are categorised as '**NEGLIGIBLE**'.

Representative Viewpoint Assessment

Viewpoint selection has been chosen by a review of visual receptors within the vicinity of the site as well as the presence of landscape designations.

The baseline description of each view is contained within the visual impact assessment. The following viewpoints in Table 5 were selected as being representative of the potential visual issues associated with the proposed development, these include:

- View along access drive to No121 off Nash Grove Lane: Viewpoint 1
- View from the Rooks Nest Wood Park public footpath: Viewpoint 2
- View from the Rooks Nest Wood Park public footpath: Viewpoint 3
- View from rear garden/grassland at boundary with woodland owned by Applicant public: Viewpoint 4
- Views from adjoining (modern) housing development running full width of site boundary: Viewpoint 5

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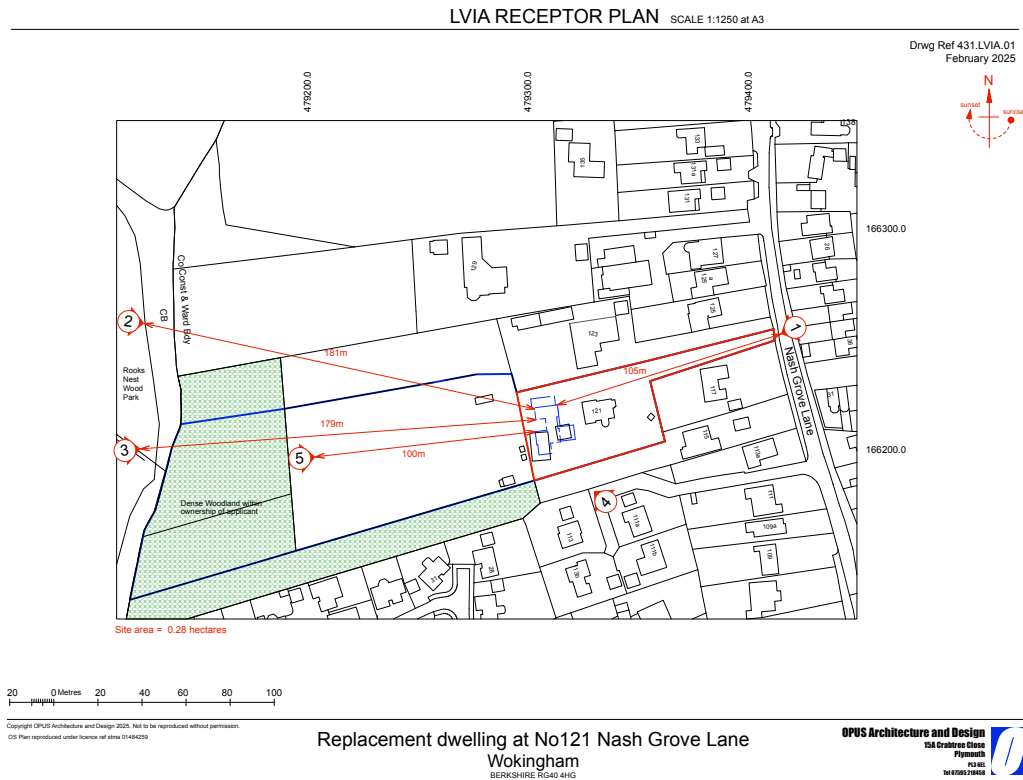


Plate showing LVIA Receptor Plan 431.LVIA.01

Table 4: Representative Viewpoints 1-5

No	Location	Distance(km) direction of view	Rationale for selection
1	Access off Nash Grove Lane	0.1km: Looking north-west	View at plot access
2	View from public footpath in Rooks Nest Wood Park	0.2km: Looking south-east	Distant view from public footpath.
3	View from public footpath in Rooks Nest Wood Park	0.17km: Looking south-east	Distant view from public footpath.
4	View from drive serving adjoining residential development	0.05km: Looking north-west	View from drive serving adjoining properties
5	View from west garden/ boundary	0.175km: Looking north-east	View of existing from applicant's land

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RVP No 1: View along access drive to No121 off Nash Grove Lane

No 121 Nash Grove Lane is accessed via a long drive off Nash Grove Lane, as is the adjoining dwelling, 123 NGL, also set back from NGL, behind No 125 NGL. The replacement dwelling will be situated deeper in the plot, with the front elevation 105m from the Lane and to the left of the existing gate.

Conclusion: The proposed works will have no/imperceptible impact upon the character of the area or the countryside.



RVP No 2: View looking south-east from Rooks Nest Wood Park public footpath

To west of the land within the Applicants ownership is Rooks Nest Wood Park, which has a circular public footpath which passes at it's closest point with circa 20-30m of the Applicant's Woodland and 220m+ to the location of the replacement dwelling. However, the topography of the land, the density of the trees and shrubs, within the park and within the client's land, ensure there are no views through to the Applicants' site.

Conclusion: The proposed works will have no impact upon the character of the area or the countryside.



RVP No 3: View looking south-east from Rooks Nest Wood Park public footpath

To west of the land within the Applicants ownership is Rooks Nest Wood Park, which has a circular public footpath which passes at it's closest point with circa 20-30m of the Applicant's Woodland and 220m+ to the location of the replacement dwelling. However, the topography of the land, the density of the trees and shrubs, within the park and within the client's land, ensure there are no views through to the Applicants' site.

Conclusion: The proposed works will have no impact upon the character of the area or the countryside.

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RVP No 4: Looking north towards from the adjoining housing development.

This viewpoint towards to applicant site from the adjoining 'modern' housing development, across the garden of No 115 NGL, shows the dense planting and trees (to be retained) along this boundary.

Conclusion: The proposed works will have no impact upon the character of the area or the countryside.

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RVP No 5: Looking east towards existing residential properties from edge of grassland, abutting wooded area, all within Applicant's ownership.

This viewpoint was chosen to illustrate that the residential development, which arguably might be described as 'back land' which has taken place along Nash Grove Lane has been contained within a specific area, ensuring that the properties have not, and do not extend into areas which would harm the open countryside. The natural, level topography combined with mature site boundaries and areas of woodland reinforce this. Located within this area, with separation distances and height commensurate, if not lower, than surrounding dwellings the proposed replacement dwelling reflects the character of the area and would cause no harm to the countryside.

The proposed works will have no/imperceptible impact upon the character of the area or the countryside.



RVP No 5: Looking east towards existing residential properties from edge of grassland, abutting wooded area, all within Applicant's ownership.

This viewpoint was chosen to illustrate that the residential development, which arguably might be described as 'back land' which has taken place along Nash Grove Lane has been contained within a specific area, ensuring that the properties have not, and do not extend into areas which would harm the open countryside. The natural, level topography combined with mature site boundaries and areas of woodland reinforce this. Located within this area, with separation distances and height commensurate, if not lower, than surrounding dwellings the proposed replacement dwelling reflects the character of the area and would cause no harm to the countryside.

The proposed works will have no/imperceptible impact upon the character of the area and the open countryside.

The number of representative viewpoints reflects the base line criteria given there are few medium/long term viewpoints into the plot due to the natural topography of the plot and the surrounding land and the high level of existing screening.

Limitations of Assessment: The field study and photographic appraisal was undertaken during late Summer/Autumn 2024 and Spring 2025. In summer months when deciduous species have their foliage, less views of the landscape will be available due to vegetation forming visual barriers.

Photographs at the end of each viewpoint indicate the general outlook for receptors. In determining the viewpoints, whether in the immediate locality or further away, the main public highways, sections of public footpaths, and some of the publicly available spaces within the study area were visited.

The viewpoints were selected “to cover as wide a range of situations as is possible, reasonable, and necessary to cover the likely significant effects (GLVIA, 3rd edition. Paragraph 6.21).

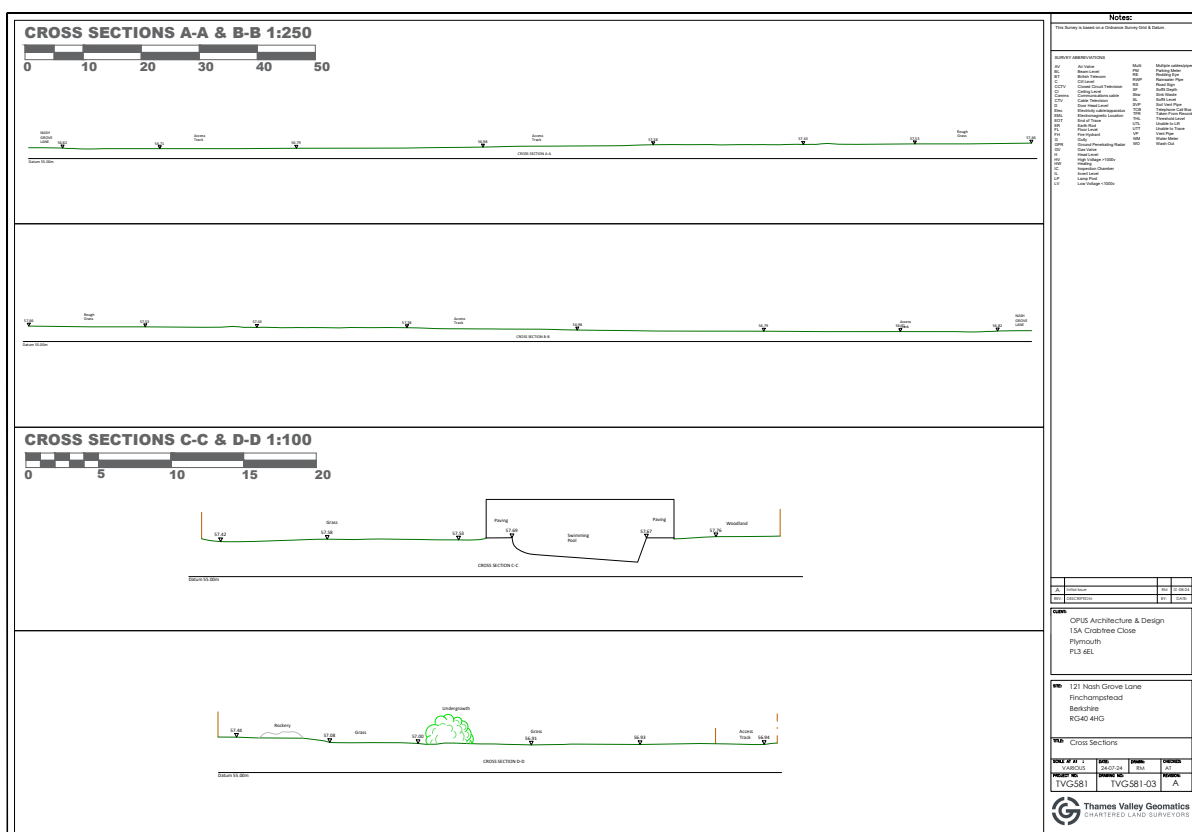
For the purposes of this report, the assessment has been based on development proposals illustrated in the planning application. The proposals include a series of elevations and sections for the various heights of buildings and a series of detailed development plans.

5.0 Assessment

5.1 Topography

A full topographic survey of the plot was commissioned as previously described. This extending out from the site to NGL and included details of the adjoining dwellings and outbuildings with ridge heights and ground levels, and the site boundary conditions. This information was made available to all the consultants.

The plot is broadly level across the site, side to side and front to back, ensuring that no part of the plot is elevated, or unduly 'prominent' within the immediate surroundings.



Site Sections

5.2 Current land uses

The existing site is a private residential dwelling with detached outbuildings including a swimming pool and full height enclosure, a detached double garage and a summer house.

It is served by a private drive to the east, linking with Nash Grove Lane.

5.3 Existing trees, hedges, woodland blocks and belts, water bodies and ditches

Please note that these are covered in detail within the Landscaping and Planting Strategy, the Arboricultural Plan and Tree schedule and the Preliminary Ecology Assessment and may also be referenced on the topographic survey.

These identify a variety of trees, which are predominantly along the site boundaries, and, in particular, along the south boundary abutting No 115 Nash Grove Lane. There are areas which would be deemed 'blocks' or 'belts', such, as the area abutting the southern boundary; the tree survey and plan acknowledge the location and size of the trees.

The limited nature of the works, and the proposed location of the replacement dwelling, on an area of lawn and access drive (to the existing detached garage) has little implications for the existing planting, borders and trees. Indeed, the proposed works will increase the number of trees and create additional herbaceous borders. Refer to the landscaping plan and strategy.

5.4 Man-made features

There are no man-made 'features' other than the buildings previously identified in the Design and Access Statement and Drwg., P.02. Schedule of Accommodation.

5.5 Views

There are no 'locally' protected views in to, across, or around the existing plot, nor the adjacent land/woodland in the ownership of the Applicant.

Indeed, dense screening restricts any views into the site as illustrated by the photographic plates taken from the selected Representative Viewpoints (RVA's).

5.6 Setting

The site is located on the northern edge of Finchampstead in the District of Wokingham, Berkshire; it is accessed via Nash Grove Lane, which connects to Barkham Ride. There are residential properties further to the south on both sides of Nash Grove Lane, but none that would be materially affected by the proposal. The surrounding context comprises

residential development and open space; Sand Martins golf club is nearby. The Waverley Prep School and Nursery is just to the north-east, at the northern end of Waverley Way

5.7 Settlement character

Finchampstead is a village of some importance in historical, visual, and archaeological terms.

Most of the housing stock consists of single and two storeys detached properties, with a relatively large number of newer and later 20th century properties, many of which would be described as 'infill' or 'backland' plots. There is a wide range of building forms and architectural styles.

Nash Grove Lane (NGL) has a mix of dwellings styles, the majority of which are older housing stock, bungalows, chalet style houses with some large detached two storey houses.

In recent years, some new low-density housing schemes have been permitted to infill strategic gaps to meet the demand in this area. The nature of the settlement in this area of the village comprises primarily detached dwellings with larger than average plots and onsite parking, with detached garages or car ports. There are also open areas, the closest being Woodend Green and several ponds.

Immediately surrounding and adjoining the site there are a two storey houses, and single storey modern bungalows with mono pitch, pitched and areas of flat roofs.

Materials include painted render, clay facing brickwork, timber cladding and glazed feature areas. Roofs are generally finished with plain tile, or slate. In short there is a wide 'palette' of materials and variety in building types and ages.

As you approach the edges of the settlement where properties abut open farmland the dwellings tend to be detached and occupy larger plots with hedgerow boundaries and/or woodland. The proposed development would fall into this classification.

5.8 Landscape and Habitat character

There are no ecological statutory designated sites located on or adjacent to the site. The nearest statutory designated site is Longmoor Bog Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Local Nature Reserve (LNR), located 1.23 km south-west of the site. It should be noted that the site lies within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone5. The nearest non-statutory designated site is Brook Farm Meadow Berkshire Local Wildlife Site (BLWS) located 0.18 km to the west of the site.

According to the Multi-agency website, there are no Habitats of Principal Importance (HPIs) located on or adjacent to the site. The nearest HPI is an area of Deciduous Woodland, also noted in the National Forest Inventory as Broadleaved Woodland, located approximately 0.1 km to the west of the site. The site is also located within a Network Enhancement Zone 26.

Google Earth Imagery shows that the site has remained largely unchanged since at least 2003, comprising the existing residential dwelling and outbuildings, with associated hard standing and garden areas.

Vegetated Garden

The site is dominated by garden areas, comprising lawns and ornamental planting. Species recorded in the lawns were typical of amenity grassland and included perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*), cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*), annual meadow-grass (*Poa annua*), dandelion (*Taraxacum* agg.) and ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*). Ornamental species recorded included box (*Buxus sempervirens*), magnolia (*Magnolia* sp.), camellia (*Camellia* sp.), witch-hazel (*Hamamelis* sp.), bamboo (*Pleioblastus* sp.), primrose (*Primula* sp.), honeysuckle (*Lonicera* sp.), skimmia (*Skimmia* sp.), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and bay (*Laurus nobilis*). Areas along the access track had started to be colonized by bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.).

The garden, due to its previous management regime, provides limited foraging and sheltering opportunities for wildlife.

Developed Land/Sealed Surface

Four buildings were recorded on the site, comprising a bungalow, detached garage and outbuildings, with associated driveway and patio areas.

6.0 Assessment of Effects

This section aims to identify the issues relating to the impacts of the proposed development during construction and operation. The characteristics of the proposed development that have been considered as part of this assessment are described below.

6.1 Landscape Character Impacts during Construction

The plot is an enclosed area of managed 'garden' with mature, dense planting along the site boundary on all sides, and with further herbaceous borders, which are to be retained.

Given the location of the plot and the proposed location of the replacement dwelling the boundary treatment we consider that the proposed works will have only a minor effect on the Landscape Character during the construction period.

6.2 Visual Impacts during Construction

The potential for visual impact will fluctuate throughout the period of construction, particularly during specific construction operations such as excavation for footings and floor slabs and the construction of the external envelope. As construction progresses there will be a gradual change in the visual 'environment', however the scheme drawings indicate that the scale and massing of the replacement dwelling, as viewed by the primary receptors, will have limited impact.

The temporary introduction of features such as scaffolding will have a short-term visual effect on the visual amenity of sensitive receptors. Additional temporary visual effects will be caused because of construction vehicle movements to and from the site.

During the construction phase, some temporary lighting may be required to ensure safe working, restricted to the winter months, however this will be limited and related to site working hours, which may be enforced by planning condition ie 8.00am- 4.00pm Monday and 8.00am to mid-day on Saturday.

The construction works which we would associate with the highest visual impact, the excavation, the substructure, and the external envelope works, will occur over a relatively short period; they will most likely be completed in the region of 16-18 weeks of commencement.

When completed the project will result in an almost imperceptible change in the existing view and will form an apparent small element in the wider landscape that may be missed by the observer or receptor. This would result in a small magnitude of change within the existing landscape framework.

7.0 Recommendations and Mitigation for Development

7.1 Recommendations

The proposed dwelling should respect the overall scale and massing of the dwellings in the immediate vicinity of the site, namely the single storey bungalows, the 1.5 storey chalet style properties and the 2 storey modern dwellings abutting the plot to the south.

The mature, dense hedging and existing trees should be retained where possible, as they provide cover which effectively screens the interior of the plot and will reduce the impact of vehicular lighting and ground floor lighting. In addition, they provide habitat for wildlife as identified by the PEA. The Landscape and Planting Strategy has identified areas of 'new' border and tree planting, which will supplement specific areas to provide privacy, habitat and reinforce the semi-rural character of the area. This planting should include species which reflect the local character and are a combination of native and naturalised specimens.

Materials that form the external envelope of the buildings should reflect, or complement, the surrounding area; for example, clay facing brick, render, timber cladding and plain tiles/slate, all of which are typical of the immediate neighbouring properties and the settlement area, of Finchampstead as a whole.

7.2 Mitigation

The application incorporates the following elements which address and mitigate the proposed works.

- I. The layout retains most of the existing hedgerows and trees and includes a net gain in the quantum of native hedgerow provision and tree planting.
- II. The development includes the demolition of several dilapidated and poor-quality outbuildings which, in some case, are in a poor state of repair, and where their removal will have a positive impact upon the countryside.
- III. The scheme provides a new 5-bedroom family dwelling with garaged parking and future proofed- with low energy and renewable energy provision. The design of the dwelling incorporate areas for home-working and will be compliant with Part M(2) allowing accessible living with a minimum of one bedroom and wash facilities at ground floor.
- IV. The layout utilises the existing vehicular, pedestrian and cycle accesses off Nash Grove Lane.
- V. The scheme incorporates measures to contain and attenuate foul and surface water.
- VI. Any proposed external lighting should be minimised. Where external lighting is required, it should be LED lamps (<3000k) with glass glazing, rather than plastic, as these produce the least amount of UV light, minimising the attraction effects on insects and disturbance to local bats.
- VII. Any external lighting proposed for the development should be aimed carefully, to minimise illumination of hedgerows.
- VIII. External security lighting should be set on short timers and be sensitive to large moving objects only, to prevent any passing bats switching them on.

8.0 Conclusion

The Landscape Character and Visual Assessment Criteria data, refer section 4, confirms:

- The landscape value has been assessed as having **Low** sensitivity to this form of development. Refer table 1.
- The visual receptor sensitivity has been assessed as **Very Small**. Refer table 2.
- The definition of magnitude of the visual impact has been assessed as **Negligible**. Refer Table 3.

The significance of the visual effect is determined by the assessment of the receptor, refer Table 4, and in this instance is determined as **Minor**, suggesting that the proposal **will have little or no adverse impact upon the character of the area**.

This is due to several key factors:

1. the site-specific topography.
2. the existing, dense mature interceding vegetation.
3. the scale and massing of the proposed dwellings which have been designed to minimise the visual impact of the development, with ridge levels lower than the adjacent dwellings and outbuildings.
4. the additional supplemental landscaping and planting

When this development is assessed in context with the wider landscape, the visual impact would be visually negligible, blending in with the mature, surrounding landscape. Following mitigation measures, vegetation growth and weathering, we assess that there would be no significant visual impact from any of the viewpoints identified.