

LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL

**GROVE OIL TERMINUS
OLD BATH ROAD, CHARVIL, TWYFORD
RG19 4AL**

Prepared by
DEP Landscape Architecture



on behalf of

Speedy Fuels & Lubricants Ltd

DRAFT

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APPENDIX I - METHODOLOGY

This report assesses the likely significant effects of the development on the environment in respect of Landscape and Views. The document has been prepared by DEP Landscape Architecture Ltd, a Landscape Institute Registered Practice. The work has been undertaken by Tim Rogers BA(Hons), DipLA, CMLI. and checked by Emma Podmore BSc (Dual Hons). The Zone of Visual Influence mapping has been undertaken by Adam Pickering BSc(Hons), DipLA MLD, CMLI.

I.0 INTRODUCTION

I.1 INTRODUCTION

DEP Landscape Architecture Ltd has been commissioned by Speedy Fuels and Lubricants Ltd to produce a Landscape Appraisal for the partial redevelopment of the site to create a fuel oil storage and distribution facility with ancillary parking, office space and a vehicle wash down facility at Grove Service Station, Old Bath Road, Charvil.

I.2 METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted has been taken from the current Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) 3rd Edition 2013 and other recognised published industry standards and techniques.

A desktop study of landscape policies, designations, and published character appraisals was undertaken and an independent appraisal made of the character and value of the proposed development site and surrounding landscape. To determine the effects of development on the landscape the following key aspects were considered:

Elements: Individual elements within the landscape, which are quantifiable and include features such as hills, valleys, woods, trees, hedges and ponds;

Characteristics: Elements or combinations of elements that make a particular contribution to the character of the area for example scenic quality, tranquillity or wildness;

Character: Combination of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement.

These features combine to give an indication of the sensitivity of the landscape and its ability to accept change. In addition the landscape condition, value and quality are considered and appraised as part of this assessment. These factors will determine the magnitude of change. The detailed methodology is contained within Appendix I.

I.3 SITE CONTEXT

The site is located between the settlements of Twyford (approx. 150m to the East) and Charvil (approx. 250m to the West) within designated Countryside. The site forms part of a cluster of buildings of mixed commercial uses which borders Charvil Country Park while open countryside lies to the North. The site is accessed from Old Bath Road (A3032) which connects the two settlements.

I.4 SITE DESCRIPTION

The site currently consists of 2no. two-storey red brick buildings with steel frames, with the garage fronting the site, and smaller single storey buildings to the rear serving different uses associated with the vehicle service business as well as a gym. The adjacent Denmark House is a single building which, while made of similar external materials to the main buildings on site, has a lighter appearance.

The site is bordered by mature trees to the east, west and south, while a grass bank with several mature trees adjacent to the highway offers a slight green buffer. However, the site as a whole has been paved over with very limited examples of soft landscaping. While the bordering trees offers a level of screening the site is visible from the highway.

I.5 STUDY AREA

The study covers an area with an approximate radius of 2.5km centred on the site.

I.6 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

The proposals comprise the partial redevelopment of the site to create a fuel oil storage and distribution facility with ancillary parking, office space and a vehicle wash down facility. The development would accommodate a fleet of up to 15no. 15.2m HGV's

with 8no. surface mounted fuel storage tanks. The site would be reconfigured to provide parking for the HGV's, staff and turning areas. The large building located towards the rear of the site would be demolished, while portacabin buildings would be installed.



FIGURE I - STUDY AREA



FIGURE 2 - AERIAL VIEW TO SHOW THE CONTEXT OF THE SITE PROPOSED FOR DEVELOPMENT



THE SITE

2.0 PLANNING POLICY

2.1 PLANNING CONTEXT

This section describes the background of relevant national and local planning policies, in so far as they relate to landscape matters, against which the development proposals will be determined. In terms of the planning context for the Site and surrounding area, the relevant Planning Policy Documents and Statutory Plans are as follows:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) July 2021;
- National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) March 2014 (as updated);
- The Wokingham Borough Core Strategy January 2010;
- The Wokingham Borough Managing Development Delivery (MDD) Local Plan February 2014; and
- The emerging Consultation Draft Local Plan Update (February 2020 – April 2020) and its evidence base.

2.2 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (2023)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) includes planning policies and guidance requiring developers to respond to the natural environment, landscape character and integrating the development into its local surroundings.

Section 12 of the Framework addresses the issue of good design and recommends that planning decisions should aim to ensure that developments respond to the local character and history. Specifically, at paragraph 130 it is stated that development should “add to the overall quality of the area...”, “are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping”, and “be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting...”. Whilst paragraph 131 emphasises the importance of trees “in contributing to the character and quality of urban environments and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change” and... “that new streets are tree-lined that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees and that existing trees are retained wherever possible”.

Section 15 of the Framework addresses the natural environment. For landscape, this means “protecting and enhancing valued landscapes.... (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)”, “recognising the intrinsic beauty of the countryside” and balancing any ‘harm’ to the landscape resource with the benefits of the scheme in other respects. This section also deals with protected landscapes, such as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, although paragraph 176 is not relevant to the Site as it is not located within a designated landscape or AONB.

2.3 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) provides further context to the National Planning Policy Framework and it is intended that both documents should be read together. In relation to landscape matters, the NPPG – Natural Environment explains the key issues in implementing policy to protect biodiversity and natural environment and provides advice on how the character of landscapes can be used to inform planning decisions and what green infrastructure is and why it is important to delivering sustainable developments. The NPPG also explains how green infrastructure can help to deliver wider planning policy including:

- Requiring good design;
- Promoting healthy communities;
- Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change; and
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

2.4 WOKINGHAM BOROUGH CORE STRATEGY JANUARY 2010 AND MANAGING DEVELOPMENT DELIVERY (MDD) LOCAL PLAN FEBRUARY 2014

Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) adopted the Wokingham Core Strategy Development Plan Document in January 2010 and this sets out the vision for how the borough will develop in the period to 2026 and provides a broad spatial vision and policies designed to achieve this. It is the first of the Development Plan Documents (DPD) produced by the Council supported

by additional documents such as the Managing Development Delivery (MDD) Local Plan which was adopted in February 2014. It is anticipated that the approach to development outlined in the Core Strategy DPD would last until March 2026.

By reference to the Local Plan Proposals Map of the adopted WBC Core Strategy, the Site is not located within a designated landscape such as AONB / SLA / AGLV etc nor is it located within the Metropolitan Green Belt. However, of relevance to landscape issues and the development of the Site are the following CS and MDD Local Plan policies:

Core Strategy

- Policy CP1 – Sustainable Development;
- Policy CP3 – General Principles for Development;
- Policy CP7 – Biodiversity
- Policy CP11 – Proposals outside Development Limits (including countryside)

Managing Development Delivery Local Plan

- Policy CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development;
 - Policy CC02 – Development Limits
 - Policy CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping;
 - Policy CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction;
 - Policy TB21 – Landscape Character; and
 - Policy TB23 – Biodiversity and Development;
- Policy CP1 – Sustainable Development: Planning permission will be granted for development proposals that, amongst other things, maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment, ensure the provision of adequate drainage, and provide attractive, functional, accessible, safe, secure and adaptable schemes;
- Policy CP3 – General Principles for development: Planning permission will be granted for proposals that are of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area together with a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life.
- Policy CP7 – Biodiversity: Development which may harm habitats or, species of principle importance in England for nature conservation, veteran trees or features of the landscape that are of major importance for wild flora and fauna (including wildlife and river corridors), whether directly or indirectly will be only permitted if mitigation measures can be put in place to prevent damaging impacts.
- Policy CC02 – Development Limits: New development located at the edge of, but within the development limit, should demonstrate how the interrelationship between open countryside and the built form is respected. Careful siting and design of new development at the edge of development limits must allow for an approach which provides a transition between the built area and the open countryside. The aim is for development to recede and soften in relation to adjoining open countryside and avoid hard edges.
- Policy CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping: Development proposals should demonstrate how they have considered the integration of the scheme with any adjoining public open space or countryside, protect and retain existing trees, hedges and other landscape features.
- Policy TB21 – Landscape Character: Proposals must demonstrate how they have addressed the requirements of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment, including the landscape quality; landscape strategy; landscape sensitivity and key issues. Proposals shall retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape.
- Policy TB23 – Biodiversity and Development: Planning permission for development proposals will only be granted where they comply with policy CP7 – Biodiversity of the Core Strategy and also demonstrate how they provide opportunities, including through design, layout and landscaping to incorporate new biodiversity features or enhance existing features.

2.5 WOKINGHAM LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

Wokingham Borough Council is in the process of preparing a new local plan; the Local Plan Update, which will put in place a new planning strategy for the period to 2040. Once adopted, it will replace the current Core Strategy and Managing Development Delivery local plans. The Local Plan Update will include a vision, objectives and strategy for development and growth in the borough.

The Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2023-2040: Proposed Submission Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination by an independent Planning Inspector on Friday 28 February 2025.

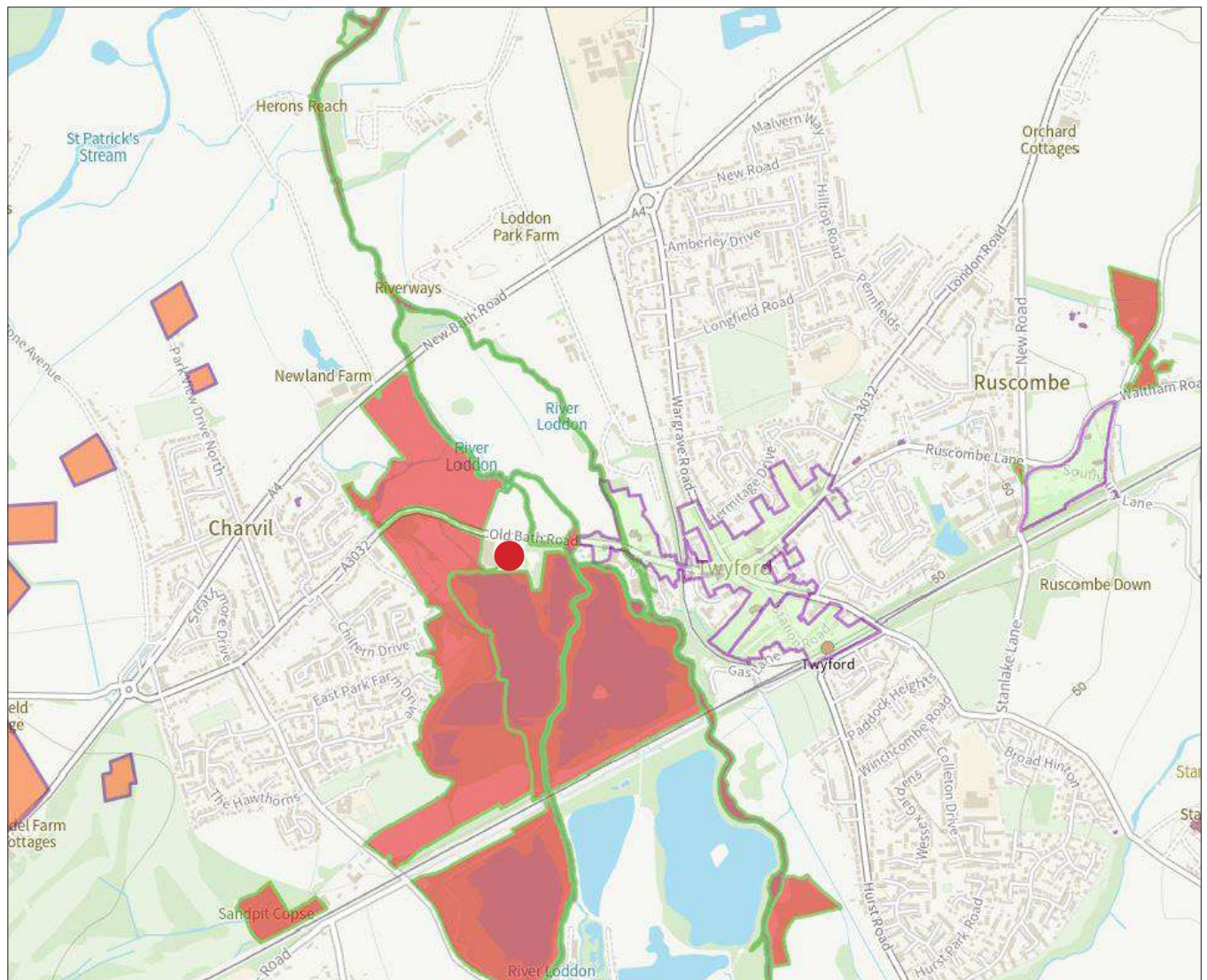
2.6 OTHER RELEVANT PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

None of the trees within or around the Site are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's).

The Heritage England website and the Council's Interactive Planning Map has been reviewed/checked and the centre of Twyford is covered by the Twyford Conservation Area which extends west to cover the ground of Bridge House adjoining the River Loddon.

The review also found that there are no listed buildings within or immediately adjoining the Site although there are a number of listed buildings to the east on the Old Bath Road including Bridge House (Grade II listed building), and Milestone (Grade II listed building), Mill House (Grade II listed building) and The Waggon and Horses Public House (Grade II listed building) together with buildings on the High Street and the Church of St Mary (Grade II listed building) within Twyford Conservation Area. There is no intervisibility between the Site and the Conservation Area and these listed buildings due to intervening built development and areas of trees and other vegetation and therefore the setting of the Conservation Area and listed buildings has been discounted from this appraisal for this reason.

Although no Public Rights of Way run through the site, there are a number of well-used footpaths in the open countryside and within the study area, which connect into the wider footpath network. A footpath (FP CHAR3/Loddon long Distance Path), located approximately 60m to the west of the Site, runs in a north-south direction, connecting Old Bath Road and Loddon Nature Reserve. Another footpath (TWF2), located approximately 350m to the East of the Site on the edge of Twyford, also runs in a north-south direction, connecting Old Bath Road and Loddon Nature Reserve.



KEY

Heritage and Conservation

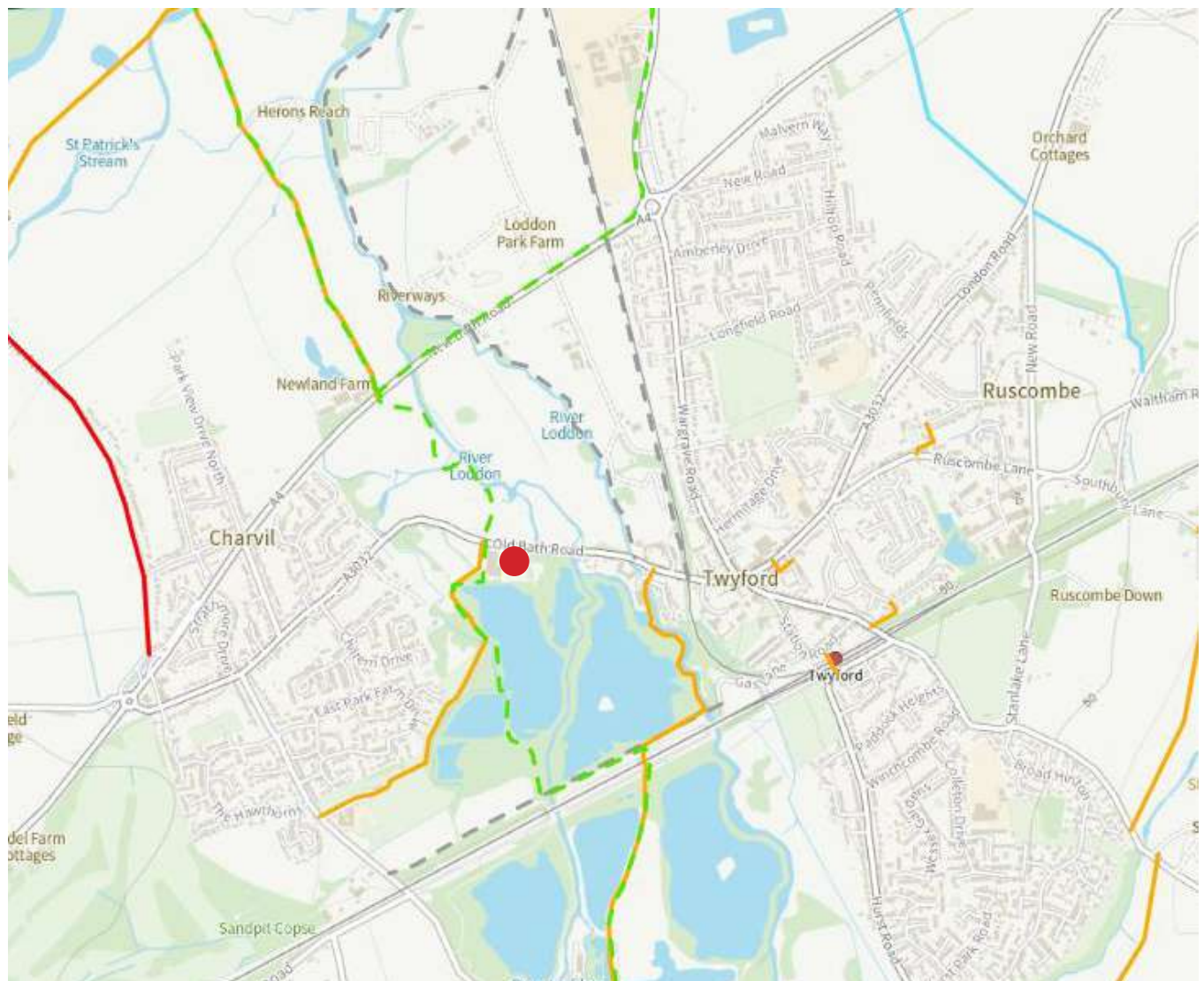
-  Conservation Areas
-  Listed Buildings
-  Scheduled Ancient Monuments

Local Wildlife Sites

-  Local Wildlife Site
-  Proposed Local Wildlife Site

 The Site

FIGURE 3 - EXTRACT OF WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL PLANNING POLICIES AND CONSTRAINTS MAP



KEY

Public Rights of Way

- Bridleway
- Byway open to all traffic
- Footpath
- Footpath with limitations
- Restricted Byway

Greenway Routes

- - - Greenway Route

- The Site

FIGURE 4 - EXTRACT OF WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY MAP

3.0 SITE CONTEXT

The following photographs have been chosen to provide a visual overview of the site and the surrounding landscape context.



FIGURE 5 - PHOTO LOCATION MAP



1 View of site frontage from Old Bath Road



2 View into site from site entrance



3 View of site entrance from within site



4 View looking south towards building to be demolished



5 View from southwest corner of site looking east



6 View looking south from site towards Loddon Nature Reserve



7 View looking north towards building to be demolished



8 View from southeast corner of site looking northwest



9 View from eastern edge of site looking southwest

4.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

A baseline for Landscape Character of the wider study area has been taken from published material which includes *Natural England National Character Areas* and *The Northumberland Landscape Character Assessment*. These documents have been studied to help determine the key elements and characteristics of the site and surrounding landscape and will be used to help make an assessment of the sensitivity of the site and surrounding landscape to change.

4.1 NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Natural England divides England into 159 distinct National Character Areas. Each is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural and economic activity. The proposed development Site and the wider study area fall within NCA 115 Thames Valley.

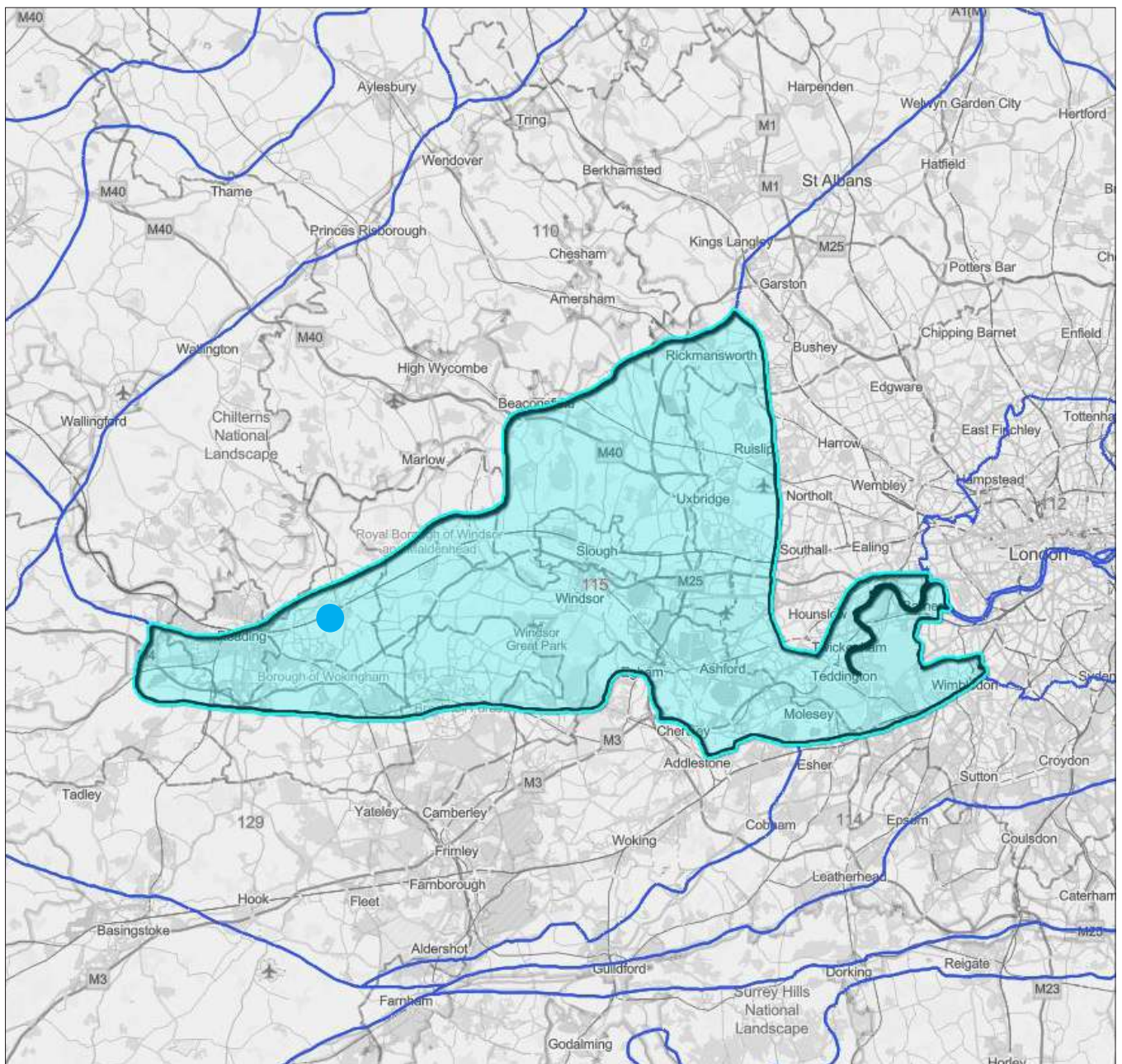


FIGURE 6 - NCA 115 - THAMES VALLEY

● SITE LOCATION

4.1.1 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER - NCA 115 THAMES VALLEY

The Thames Valley character area covers a large area (86,062 ha) and forms low lying, wedge – shaped areas, widening from Reading towards the south-west fringes of Greater London, including Slough, Windsor and the Colne Valley. The River Thames provides a unifying feature through a very diverse landscape of urban and suburban settlements, infrastructure networks, fragmented agricultural land, historic parks, commons, woodland, reservoirs and extensive minerals workings.

There has been much development in this NCA in recent history, and continued pressures within the next 20 years provide scope for creating new landscapes with good green infrastructure links and increased broadleaved woodland. This will help to reduce noise and air pollution, and reduce the impact of urban fringe development. The closure and restoration of landfill sites and mineral workings provide additional opportunities. The Thames Valley NCA is dissected by major transport links that connect London to the west, including the M4, M40, the London orbital (M25), and the Paddington main line to the west, as well as a plethora of A-roads linking the main urban areas.

The key characteristic of the Thames Valley relevant to this assessment are:

- Flat and low-lying land, rising to low, river-terraced hills, which include the prominent local outcrop of chalk on which Windsor Castle sits.
- The underlying geology is dominated by the London Clay which, over much of the area, is overlain by river-lain sands and gravels.
- The numerous hydrological features provide unity to an area which otherwise lacks homogeneity; these features include the River Thames and its tributaries, streams, lakes, canals and open waterbodies (the result of restored gravel workings).
- Farming is limited. Where it survives, grazed pasture is the major land use within a generally open, flat and featureless landscape. The field pattern is medium-scale and irregular, with smaller fields to the west. Localised areas of species-rich hay meadows provide a splash of colour in summer.
- Although densely populated and developed, pockets of woodland, open grassland, parkland, wetlands and intimate meadows provide escape and tranquillity, and include a variety of habitats supporting important populations of many species, notably stag beetle, shoveler, gadwall and other invertebrates and wildfowl.
- There are small but biologically important areas of lowland heathland – especially on higher sandy ground in the north – and a small area to the south falls within the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) buffer zone.
- To the south, the open Thames flood plain dominates, with its associated flat grazing land, becoming characterised by a number of formal historic landscapes on higher ground. Between Hampton and Kew, the River Thames forms the focus of a series of designed landscapes.
- The area has an urban character, and there are very few villages of more traditional character, although almost half of the area is green belt land and development has been restricted in areas like Crown Estate land and Eton College grounds.
- The area is important for recreation, both for residents and visitors. Historic parkland and commons provide access to green space, the Thames Path National Trail runs the length of the NCA, and a variety of activities are enjoyed on the river and other waterbodies.”
- In the south-west, the gently rolling valley sides give way to a flatter plain east of Reading, which widens to include the Slough and Windsor areas. Much of this area is near flood level, although Slough lies on slightly terraced land above the flood plain and Windsor Castle sits on a prominent local outcrop of chalk.

4.2 LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Regional landscape character is assessed within the Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (WBLCA), prepared for the Council by Land Use Consultants and published in November 2019. The WBLCA follows the current Natural England (NE) guidance “An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment” published by NE in October 2014. The background to the WBLCA is set out at paragraph 1.23 and states:

“This Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) forms part of the evidence base to inform the Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU). This updated LCA aims to provide an objective description of the landscape and a strategy for managing it. The LCA provides an evidence base to support policies within the LPU or more widely guide decision making around development and the management of future change. It is designed to be used both as a positive tool to guide new development or land uses in a way which understands local variations in landscape character and to protect and enhance the special qualities and local distinctiveness of Wokingham’s landscape”.

Whilst paragraph 1.25 goes on to state:

“This assessment builds on the existing Wokingham Landscape Character Assessment produced for the authority in 2004 but has been updated in line with current good practice, and to reflect the present state of the landscape, particularly in those areas where changes have occurred since 2004, for example in terms of development, agriculture and land use. The updated LCA contains more detailed evaluative information to provide greater understanding of key sensitivities and values to help in decision-making and accommodating change by providing an understanding of what is valued and why”.

Part 2 of the WBLCA sets out the landscape character classification of area of the borough and identifies 14 landscape character types (LCT’s) and 28 landscape character areas (LCA’s). The Site and its immediate surrounds are identified as lying within the LCT B – ‘River Valley with Open Water’ and LCA BI – ‘Loddon River Valley with Open Water’ (which reflects the 2004 WDLA).

4.2.1 WOKINGHAM BOROUGH LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Landscape Character Type B – ‘River Valley with Open Water’ is distinguished by a flat low land alluvial or river terrace floodplain, where mineral extraction has had a significant and lasting impact on the character and use of the valley landscape. Restored gravel workings with large expanses of open water support wetland vegetation and are popular for recreation.

Landscape Character Area BI – ‘Loddon River Valley with Open Water’ is summarised as follows:

This peaceful floodplain landscape in the valley of the River Loddon falls between the urban areas of Woodley and the large villages of Winnersh, Twyford and Charvil. Former gravel extraction has modified the landscape resulting in a mix of land uses including open water bodies, landfill sites, and restored agricultural fields, nature reserves and country parks.

The character area follows a linear course connecting with the River Valley landscape types of A2: Loddon to the south and A1: Thames to the north. The northern boundary represents the transition to the Thames floodplain. The southern and western boundaries are marked by the edge of built up areas, of the Winnersh Triangle Industrial Estate (parallel to the A329) and Woodley-Charvil respectively. The eastern boundary is defined by the settlement edge of Twyford and the distinct landscape of C2: Hurst River Terrace which follows the route of the A321 Lodge Road – Davis Street.

The assessment summarises Character Area BI – ‘Loddon River Valley with Open Water’ as follows:

“This peaceful floodplain landscape in the valley of the River Loddon falls between the urban areas of Woodley and the large villages of Winnersh, Twyford and Charvil. Former gravel extraction has modified the landscape resulting in a mix of land uses including open water bodies, landfill sites, and restored agricultural fields, nature reserves and country parks. The character area follows a linear course connecting with the River Valley landscape types of A2: Loddon to the south and A1: Thames to the north. The northern boundary represents the transition to the Thames floodplain. The southern and western boundaries are marked by the edge of built up areas, of the Winnersh Triangle Industrial Estate (parallel to the A329) and Woodley-Charvil respectively. The eastern boundary is defined by the settlement edge of Twyford and the distinct landscape of C2: Hurst River Terrace which follows the route of the A321 Lodge Road – Davis Street”.

The assessment identifies the key characteristics of the Character Area B1 – ‘Loddon River Valley with Open Water’ as:

- Flat alluvial flood plain landscape around 35-40m AOD with an absence of enclosing valley side. The mineral resource of the area, with its pockets of river terrace gravels and sands has resulted in extensive gravel extraction, changing its original character.
- The Loddon and Old River, medium sized tributaries of the Thames, meander gently through the area. The riverine landscape is crossed by a network of drainage ditches with bank-side pollarded willows and occasional fords at river crossings.
- Restored and flooded former gravel extraction works have created large expanses of open water with fringing carr vegetation, which have developed into ecologically important wetland habitats designated as LWS. The BAP priority habitat eutrophic standing water is important for wildfowl and other birds, particularly at the Charvil Nature Reserve.
- Enclosed wooded context due to the presence of mature natural and restored woodlands around the flooded gravel pits and along riverbanks.
- Relatively undeveloped floodplain, with small and medium sized fields containing remnant pockets of traditional pastureland, and larger restored arable fields and horse paddocks near the edge of settlements.
- Popular recreational landscapes including Dinton Pastures Country Park, Charvil Country Park and Charvil Meadows.
- Built development is confined to small clusters around fording points including historic mill buildings e.g. Sandford Mill, and farmsteads at the floodplain fringe, many of which are listed buildings. A small section of the Twyford Conservation Area lies within this area.
- Urban influence of encroaching peripheral development, particularly housing development on former gravel works east of Woodley, the suburbs of Winnersh / Earley and modern commercial buildings at Winnersh Triangle located in the south near Loddon Bridge.
- Filtered views of the River Loddon and Old River including white painted bridges and occasional fords e.g. at Landsend Lane.
- Road and rail infrastructure create local noise disturbance, particularly in the south of the area with the junctions of the A329 (M), A320 and the railway lines, which cross the area.

The assessment evaluates the valuable landscape attributes of the area as follows:

- “Undeveloped riverine character of much of this lowland landscape with its network of rivers, drainage ditches and restored lakes which provides a strong sense of place.
- Wooded context of natural and restored woodland areas and fringing carr vegetation around flooded gravel pits, including pollarded willows, which provide a sense of place, as well as screening development and transportation corridors.
- Remnant pockets of traditional pasture, with pollarded willows along banksides and drainage ditches.
- The mosaic of ecologically valuable wetland and woodland habitats including BAP priority habitats designated as LWS including those of national importance at Lodge Wood and Sanford Mill SSSI. The restored gravel works support a diverse range of birds and nationally scarce flora.
- Distinctive historic built form clustered at river crossings including historic mills, white painted bridges and listed buildings at Twyford, as well as the farms on the floodplain edge which give the landscape a sense of time-depth and contribute to scenic quality.

- Valued areas for recreation including the large Country Parks, accessible through a network of bridleways and public footpaths which allow enjoyment of the area.
- Localised areas of tranquillity particularly around the restored lakes, and away from transport corridors and the visual influence of adjacent settlements.

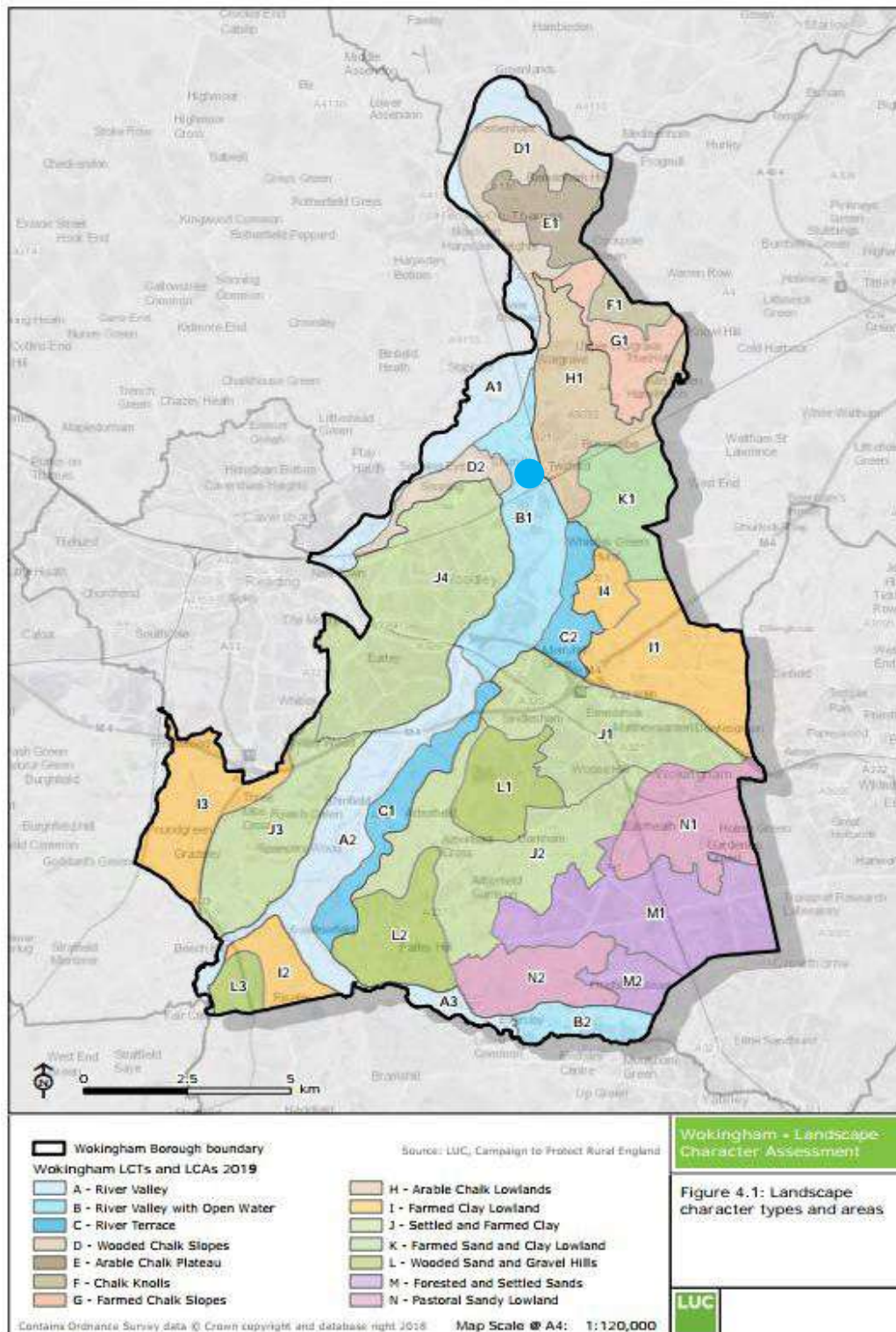


FIGURE 7 - WOKINGHAM LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES AND AREAS MAP

● SITE LOCATION

5.0 LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL

A local character appraisal for the site and surrounding landscape has been carried out as part of the landscape assessment. For the purposes of this appraisal the surrounding landscape within the study area has been broken down into two different character areas. Each character area will be defined through a variety of characteristics and elements which include; structure, density and scale, land use, topography and visual amenity. A combination of site visit and desk top research have informed this appraisal with both built form and the natural environment considered.



FIGURE 8 - CHARACTER AREA DESCRIPTIONS MAP

5.1 OPEN COUNTRYSIDE

The landscape context of the study area is predominantly open rural countryside to the north and south (and the built-up areas of Twyford to the east and Charvil to the west of the Site). The study area does have some of the general qualities of the NCA (Thames Valley), including; woodland, farmland and influence of urban edge. The overall sensitivity of the Thames Valley NCA is low.

The landscape of the local character type/area (Loddon River Valley with Open Water) has an overall moderate quality derived from a moderate strength of character and moderate condition. The assessment considers that the area has a medium sensitivity to change.

The topography of the area is dominated by the River Thames and River Loddon floodplain and river valleys at or below 35 metres AOD with the land rising steeply to the north of the River Thames to the dip slope of the Chiltern Hills rising to about 100 metres AOD whilst to the east and west of the River Loddon valley to land rising gently and to undulating between 35 to 60 metres AOD.

The area of open countryside to the north occupies low-lying areas within the River Loddon / Old River floodplain and River Thames floodplain. This countryside comprises a mosaic of open small to medium sized pasture fields subdivided by hedgerows and hedgerows trees to the west of the River Loddon, open small scale, irregular fields of grasslands, hedgerows and trees within Charvil Meadows Country Park and larger scale, arable fields to the northwest and extensive areas of fruit growing fields and orchards, including some covered by polytunnels, to the north and northeast.

Tree cover within the landscape surrounding the Site is relatively dense, consisting of riverside trees, mainly mature pollarded willows and other deciduous trees, adjoining the River Loddon and Old River, managed hedgerows with some hedgerow trees subdividing small to medium fields to the west and north with tree cover increasing noticeably to the south with more wooded areas around former gravel workings within Charvil Country Park. To the north, the A4 is lined with trees and discontinuous sections of mature overgrown hedgerows whilst to the west the Henley to Twyford railway line has some areas of track side vegetation mainly scrub with trees situated in rear gardens or on the outer edge of the corridor.

To the south, the Site borders the northern edge of Charvil Wildlife Reserve, a group of large water bodies within the flood plain between the River Loddon and Old River, established from former gravel workings. The local landscape character type is distinguished by a flat lowland alluvial or river terrace floodplain, where mineral extraction has had a significant and lasting impact on the character and use of the valley landscape. These restored gravel workings with large expanses of open water support wetland vegetation and are popular for recreation.

Throughout the open countryside within the study area, there are a number of detracting land uses, including extensive solar PV farms, poly tunnels and transport infrastructure, including the busy A4/New Bath Road and the Maidenhead to Reading-mainline railway.



Open water immediately south of the Site



Loddon Nature Reserve to the south of the Site



River Loddon floodplain, north of Old Bath Road



Flat river floodplain landscape of Charvil Meadows, north of the site

Throughout the open countryside within the study area, there are a number of detracting land uses, including extensive solar PV farms, poly tunnels and transport infrastructure, including the busy A4/New Bath Road and the Maidenhead to Reading-mainline railway.

Landscape value is assessed as moderate; it is a landscape of local importance, widely used by the local community and has a sense of place recognisable and associated with the local area.

Landscape sensitivity has been assessed as medium.

5.2 SETTLEMENT

The Site is located between the built-up areas of Twyford to the east and Charvil to the west. Also partially within the study area, Woodley lies to the southwest and Sonning to the west. The edges of the smaller villages of Wargrave to the north and Whitley Green to the southeast encroach into the study area.

The study area does have some of the general qualities of the NCA (Thames Valley), including; woodland, farmland and influence of urban edge. The overall sensitivity of the Thames Valley NCA is low.

The landscape of the local character type/area (Loddon River Valley with Open Water) has an overall moderate quality derived from a moderate strength of character and moderate condition. The assessment considers that the area has a moderate sensitivity to change.

The topography of the area is dominated by the River Thames and River Loddon floodplain and river valleys at or below 35 metres AOD with the land rising steeply to the north of the River Thames to the dip slope of the Chiltern Hills rising to about 100 metres AOD whilst to the east and west of the River Loddon valley to land rising gently and to undulating between 35 to 60 metres AOD. Twyford lies between 35 and 45m AOD.



High Street, Twyford Town Centre Conservation Area



Western settlement edge of Twyford



View from footbridge over A4 New Bath Road on northern edge of Twyford



Residential development on northeastern edge of Charvil

With a mainline station, Twyford follows the alignment of the railway line and shares characteristics of settlement within the local character area, notably its distinctive historic built form clustered at the river crossing, including historic mills, white painted bridges and listed buildings. The historic core is covered by Twyford Town Centre Conservation Area, which is largely comprised of 2/3 storey dwellings. Charvil is comprised largely of 20th century residential development, with a few earlier dwellings located along Old Bath Road.

With the exception of Twyford town centre, and a number of industrial area land uses, the character of settlement within the study area is almost entirely comprised of mid-19th through to early 21st century residential development, and is typical of the settlement pattern within the wider landscape character area. The urban landscape is defined by dense settlement with post war and modern estates around earlier Victorian buildings and former country houses.

The settlement of Woodley has largely expanded due to the outwards growth of Reading and therefore the new settlement can be seen to have not so much expanded out from the older cores of Woodley Green, Earley and Butts Hill, but to have engulfed these earlier centres from the east with a disaggregated grid of planned post WW2 estates, culminating in the modern housing estates at the fringe of the area adjacent to the Loddon Valley. Early and Woodley are both settlements historically associated with the Loddon Valley. There is no discernable vernacular – the presence of older buildings in the historic cores being subsumed within the suburban architecture of later buildings. The historic core at Woodley Green is a Conservation Area.

The landscape quality has been assessed as ordinary. It comprises a distinguishable landscape structure, characteristics, patterns of landform and land cover often masked by land use. In places, there is fractured urban grain with patterns of use difficult to distinguish. Some features worthy of conservation with some detracting features.

The landscape components generally have a low or low-medium degree of sensitivity.

5.3 SITE CHARACTER AREA DESCRIPTION

Landscape Context

The landscape context of the Site and surrounding area reflects its edge of settlement location and it sits within predominantly open rural countryside to the north and south, and the built-up areas of Twyford to the east and Charvil to the west of the Site. The Project Site, being part of an industrial estate, is entirely developed and does not share any of the qualities of the national or local character areas and consequently a site-level landscape character assessment has not been undertaken. The Project Site sits within it on the edge of settlement and does not display any characteristics of value. The condition of the landscape character across the Site is of a low value and susceptibility in relation to the wider NCA which covers a broad area of distinctive features.

The area of open countryside to the north occupies low-lying areas within the River Loddon / Old River floodplain and River Thames floodplain. This countryside comprises a mosaic of open small to medium sized pasture fields subdivided by hedgerows

and hedgerow trees to the west of the River Loddon, open small scale, irregular fields of grasslands, hedgerows and trees within Charvil Meadows Country Park and larger scale, arable fields to the northwest and extensive areas of fruit growing fields and orchards, including some covered by polytunnels, to the north and northeast.

To the south, the Site borders the northern edge of Charvil Wildlife Reserve, a group of large water bodies within the flood plain between the River Loddon and Old River, established from former gravel workings. The local landscape character type is distinguished by a flat lowland alluvial or river terrace floodplain, where mineral extraction has had a significant and lasting impact on the character and use of the valley landscape. These restored gravel workings with large expanses of open water support wetland vegetation and are popular for recreation.

The Site is located immediately south of the A3032 Old Bath Road and is accessed via a shred road which also serves the adjacent industrial units.



View of the Site frontage from Old Bath Road



View from within the Site looking south



View from within the Site looking south towards Charvil Wildlife Reserve

Topography

The topography of the area is dominated by the River Thames and River Loddon floodplain and river valleys at or below 35 metres AOD. The Site is situated within the Loddon valley, is hard surfaced and is predominantly flat, at approximately 36.00m AOD.

The landform is characteristic of the established wider landscape character within the industrial estate and is spatially and visually associated with it. The Site forms part of a local area of similar characteristics. Sensitivity is assessed as low.

Land Use/Built Form

The site is comprised of industrial units, plant and hardstanding. It currently consists of 2 two-storey red brick buildings with steel frames, with the garage fronting the site, and smaller single storey buildings to the rear serving different uses associated with the vehicle service business as well as a gym. The adjacent Denmark House is a single building which, while made of similar external materials to the main buildings on site, has a lighter appearance.

The susceptibility of the site to the proposed development in terms of its land use, is low. The landscape value of the site in terms

of its land use, is limited to its industrial infrastructure use and lacks architectural character or merit. The site forms part of a wider area of industrial land which is not unique or distinct when viewed from surrounding areas. Indeed, there are few locations from where it forms part of views. In terms of land use and built form, it is considered to have low sensitivity to the change proposed.

Access (non-vehicular/vehicular)

The site is part of an industrial/commercial complex and has no public access through it. Boundaries are fenced and access points are secured by gate.

There would be no direct or indirect effects upon access, therefore, the LVIA does not consider this further.

Boundaries

The boundaries of the Site are well defined by buildings and security fencing. To the north, the site is contained by built form which fronts onto a section of Old Bath Road. To the east, the fenced boundary adjoins an access road which leads to an informal car park. The southern edge of the Site overlooks the water body of Charvil Country Park, from which it is separated by security fencing and mature trees along the outside of the boundary. The western edge of the site adjoins the neighbouring of the industrial estate, comprised of secure fencing, large warehouse/storage units and hardstandings.

Vegetation

The site is bordered by mature trees to the east, west and south, while a grass bank with several mature trees adjacent to the highway offers a slight green buffer. However, the site as a whole has been paved over with very limited examples of soft landscaping. While the bordering trees offers a level of screening the site is visible from the highway.

Tree cover within the landscape surrounding the Site is relatively dense, consisting of riverside trees, mainly mature pollarded willows and other deciduous trees, adjoining the River Loddon and Old River, managed hedgerows with some hedgerow trees subdividing small to medium fields to the west and north with tree cover increasing noticeably to the south with more wooded areas around former gravel workings within Charvil Country Park. To the north, the A4 is lined with trees and discontinuous sections of mature overgrown hedgerows whilst to the west the Henley to Twyford railway line has some areas of track side vegetation mainly scrub with trees situated in rear gardens or on the outer edge of the corridor.

Although bordered by dense trees and hedges on its eastern and southern boundaries, the Site itself is devoid of any vegetation, being comprised of industrial units, plant and hardstanding.

The susceptibility of the site to the proposed development in terms of its vegetation is low. The landscape value of the site is considered low in terms of the character and enclosure/screening which is established by the surrounding vegetation, which would be unaffected as a result of the development. It is considered to have low sensitivity to the change proposed.

Landscape Character Generally

The landscape value of the site area has been assessed as low as it is a landscape without particular noted significance; a landscape or elements infrequently used by the local community and which does not add to the overall context of the area. Due to the presence of extensive vegetation around the Site edges, (beyond the Site boundaries) views will continue to be effectively screened and filtered.

The landscape quality of the Site has been assessed as poor. It comprises a weak landscape structure, characteristic patterns of landform and land cover are missing, little or no recognisable urban grain. Lack of management and intervention has resulted in degradation. There are frequent detracting features.

The landscape components generally have a low degree of sensitivity.

5.4 LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

Below is a table which summarises the landscape effects as considered in the landscape appraisal;

LANDSCAPE RECEPTOR	SENSITIVITY	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE	EFFECTS PRE-MITIGATION
Thames Valley NCA	Low	Negligible	Negligible
Loddon River Valley with Open Water LCA	Medium	Negligible	Negligible
Open Countryside	Medium	Negligible	Negligible
Settlement	Low	None	None
Site	Low	Medium	Slight-Moderate

The development will result in a physical change within the site, from the demolition of a building and replacement with oil storage tanks and infrastructure. The proposed oil storage tanks will have a lesser height and footprint than the demolished building.

The landscape effects of the proposed development on the national and local character areas will be negligible.

The landscape effects on 'Open Countryside' are assessed as negligible due to medium sensitivity. The development will largely be physically and visually contained by the surrounding built form and vegetation, and where visible, would be seen in the context of the adjacent industrial area, so the quality and value of these landscapes would still be maintained. There would be some visibility of the proposed development from Loddon Nature Reserve to the south, but landscape effects would be unaffected due to the character remaining unchanged.

The landscape effects on 'Settlement' are assessed as none. The proposed development does not extend beyond the existing Site boundaries and will not result in any reduction of the separation of the settlements of Charvil and Twyford.

The landscape effects on the Site are assessed as slight-moderate as the sensitivity of the site is low and magnitude of change is medium. There will be a change, of land use but the context of the adjacent areas and the similarity in character of the proposed development to existing, reduces the magnitude of this change. This change would also not be uncharacteristic of the local landscape character.

5.5 LANDSCAPE MITIGATION

The retention of the key landscape features and proposed landscaping and management techniques can be used to assist with reducing the potential effects of proposed development on the site and wider landscape. The list below has been compiled taking into consideration local planning policies, key characteristic of the landscape (from the published character assessments) and the site specific character appraisal. By following the mitigation measures below, it will help ensure that important features are retained and enhanced. This in turn will help to reduce landscape effects;

- Retain and protect the existing semi-mature trees around the site boundaries. These are located beyond the Site boundaries and will remain unchanged as a result of the development.
- Improve species diversity across the site and take into consideration appropriateness of species. This would be limited to any planting that could be implemented within the Site boundaries and that would not interfere with Site operations.
- A landscape scheme comprising native species planting (such as hedgerow planting on the Site boundaries), will contribute towards an on-site biodiversity net gain.

Landscape mitigation should form an integral part of the development proposals. A Landscape Layout should be prepared and submitted in support of the planning application, which would include mitigation measures identified in this report.

6.0 VISUAL APPRAISAL

6.1 VISUAL APPRAISAL

A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) mapping sequence has been undertaken (refer to Figure 9) which identifies those areas from which the development could potentially be visible. As part of a 'bare earth' assessment, topography/landform is modelled and then as part of a 'visual buffers' assessment, the screening effect of buildings and vegetation (hedgerows and woodland) is modelled.

Viewpoints and potential receptors have been selected from various locations identified through desk top study and a site visit. Views for the visual appraisal have been chosen to provide a representation of the range of receptors (within the study area) that have views towards the site. Viewpoints have also been selected to provide a baseline for the visual amenity of the local area. Selected views may be representative of more than one receptor type e.g. public footpath and residential property and these have been described where appropriate.

All of the viewpoints are located around the local area because wider views towards the site were found to be screened by the built form of the industrial estate, topography of the landscape and the surrounding trees and vegetation. Potential receptors which clearly had no views towards the site (confirmed by the ZTV and verified during the site visit) have not been represented.

Where a viewpoint photograph has been utilised, the photograph is considered to be representative of the kind of view experienced by those receptors which are located close to where the photograph was taken. Not all the receptors identified have a respective viewpoint photograph as in many cases it was not possible to access private property in order to experience a view first hand and record it photographically.

The sensitivity of each receptor is considered as part of the appraisal. Any residential properties with elevated views across the landscape, public rights of way or panoramic views over the landscape (where the site forms a prominent part of the experience) would be described as having high sensitivity. Residential properties with restricted views, people engaged in outdoor recreation facilities (where enjoyment of the view is not the main interest) and for people travelling through the landscape (where the focus is not the view) would be described as having medium sensitivity. Low sensitivity receptors are typically people at their place of work, people travelling through the landscape in vehicles at such a speed that the nature of the views involved are short lived and have no special significance.

The visual quality has been described for each view as being either poor, moderate or high depending on the extent of the view and its importance. The magnitude of change has then been assessed for each view and a description provided to help demonstrate the potential changes to the view.

Where views of the site are possible from the wider landscape, the application site forms a relatively distant element in a narrow field of view and is seen in the context of the adjacent industrial land use. As a result, there will be relatively limited views of the application site from the study area. The main visual effects are likely to be experienced in close proximity to the application site.

Those locations outside of the study area from which the development may be visible are considered to be at such a distance that any changes to views or landscape character would not be significant. The development may result in a perceptible change in the existing view but this would not affect its character or quality.

The landscape is more open to the north where the topography is flat within the river floodplain, however longer views from publicly accessible areas are limited and largely contained by intervening layers of vegetation.

Immediately to the south, the water bodies of Loddon Nature Reserve establish an openness with views of the Site from the footpaths around the lake edges. Views from beyond the nature reserve are screened and filtered by vegetation lining the lake edges.

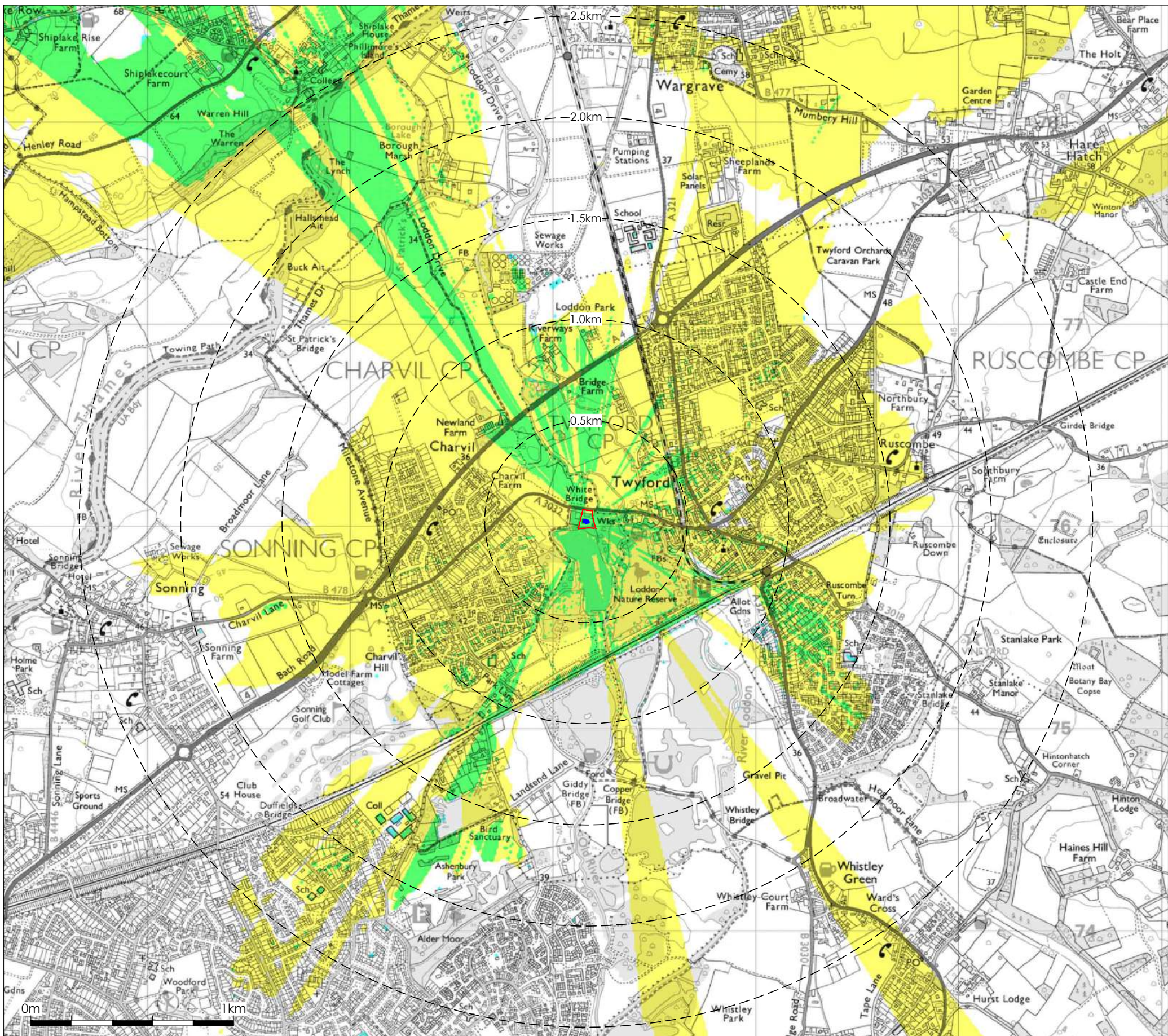
To the east and west, view are contained by vegetation lining Old Bath Road and by the built form on the edges of the adjacent settlements of Charvil and Twyford.

In summary the proposed development has been considered from 10 representative viewpoint locations;

- View 1 View from PRow CHAR3 within Loddon Nature Reserve, south of the Site.
- View 2 View from residential development on northeast edge of Charvil, west of the Site.
- View 3 View from Charvil Meadows, northwest of the Site.
- View 4 View from Loddon Drive/PRow CHAR2, northwest of the Site.
- View 5 View from footbridge over A4 New Bath Road, northeast of the Site.
- View 6 View from Bridge Farm Road, northeast of the Site.
- View 7 View from Bridge Farm Road, crossing the railway line northeast of the Site.
- View 8 View from Old Bath Road, east of the Site.
- View 9 View from PRow TWYF2 within Loddon Nature Reserve, southeast of the Site.
- View 10 View from Landsend Lane/PRow CHAR5, southwest of Site.

The viewpoint locations are identified on the Viewpoint Location Map (Figure 10).

The site survey work associated with this assessment was undertaken during March 2025.



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KEY

- Proposed Tanks 3.05 & 3.65m high
- Site Boundary
- 500m Offset Radii from Site Centre

Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

Results shown are for both bare earth & taking into account screening effects of vegetation & buildings:

- Proposed Tanks Theoretically Visible Bare Earth Results
- Proposed Tanks Theoretically Visible Accounting for Screening Effects



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SPEEDY FUELS & LUBRICANTS LTD.

Project
Old Bath Road

Description
ZTV - Bare Earth & Screening Effects

Status
For Information

Scale		Drawn	
1 sq/1km @A3		AP	
Job number	Drawing number	Date	Revision
5726	03	April 2025	01

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FIGURE 9 - ZTV MAP



FIGURE 10 - VIEWPOINT LOCATION MAP

VIEW I



6.1.1 VIEW I

This photograph is taken from PRow CHAR3 within Loddon Nature Reserve, approximately 160m south of the Site. It is representative of the view experienced by people using the footpaths within the nature reserve. Landform is flat, and the view is open across the water body in the foreground; woodland management and clearance of vegetation has opened views across the lake. Marginal vegetation, trees and shrubs line the edge of the lake and contain wider views. Fragmented hedgerow and mature trees demarcate the southern edge of the Site, filtering views.

Within the Site, the gable ends of the existing building (which is due to be demolished) are partially visible, together with free-standing oil storage tanks and associated infrastructure. The larger warehouse building of the neighbouring tyre distribution business is visible to the left of the view. Longer views are contained by the buildings on the site and by the surrounding vegetation.

VISUAL EFFECTS

The receptor sensitivity is assessed as high; the view represents that experienced by users of outdoor recreational facilities, including public rights of way, whose attention may be focused on the landscape.

The visual quality is assessed as poor; it comprises a restricted view, with built form and infrastructure visible.

The magnitude of change is assessed as negligible, as only a small part of the development will be discernible and this may be for only part of the year or be a filtered view. The quality and character of the view will remain unchanged. The existing building which is visible, will be demolished and replaced by storage tanks of a lesser height which will be lesser in extent and height than existing.

The visual effects are assessed as slight. This would reduce to negligible once mitigation planting has established and matured.

MITIGATION

Reinforce hedgerow and plant trees along the site edge to filter views of the site, establish wildlife corridors, enhance biodiversity and improve the quality of the landscape around the site boundary.



View from the Site looking south towards Viewpoint I

VIEW 2



6.1.2 VIEW 2

This photograph is taken from the rear of River Court, a residential development off Old Acres Lane on the northeast edge of Charvil, approximately 350m west of the Site. It is representative of the rear view experienced by residents of the River Court apartments. The view is open across the residents' car park in the foreground. Views beyond are contained by boundary fencing and hedgerow. Longer, elevated first floor views are contained by dense vegetation beyond, within Loddon Nature Reserve.

The Site is not visible from this viewpoint.

VISUAL EFFECTS

The receptor sensitivity is assessed as medium; the view represents that experienced by occupiers of residential properties with restricted views.

The visual quality is assessed as poor; it comprises restricted views and views over a landscape of low value and quality.

The magnitude of change is assessed as none, the development is not discernible. The quality and character of the view will remain unchanged.

The visual effects are assessed as none.

MITIGATION

Not applicable.



View from the Site looking west towards Viewpoint 2

VIEW 3



6.1.3 VIEW 3

This photograph is taken from Charvil Meadows, a country park grassland site made up of a number of connecting, traditionally managed meadows, bordering the River Loddon. It is located approximately 330m northwest of the Site. It is representative of the view experienced by people using the footpaths within the country park. Landform is flat and the view is open across the meadows in the foreground. Views beyond are contained by intervening hedgerows, trees and vegetation lining Old Bath Road. Detracting elements visible within the view include traffic traveling along Old Bath Road, field enclosure post and wire fencing, overhead power lines and associated infrastructure.

The Site may be visible as a glimpsed and filtered view from this viewpoint. However, where it is visible, the existing buildings on the northern edge of the Site will screen any views of the proposed development.

VISUAL EFFECTS

The receptor sensitivity is assessed as high; the view represents that experienced by users of outdoor recreational facilities, including public rights of way, whose attention may be focused on the landscape.

The visual quality is assessed as poor; it comprises restricted views and views over a landscape of low value and quality.

The magnitude of change is assessed as negligible, as only a part of the development may be discernible and this would be for only part of the year and as a filtered view. The quality and character of the view will remain unchanged.

The visual effects are assessed as slight.

MITIGATION

Not applicable.



View from the Site looking northwest towards Viewpoint 3

VIEW 4



6.1.4 VIEW 4

This photograph is taken from Loddon Drive/PRoW CHAR2 off the A4 New Bath Road, located approximately 590m northwest of the Site. It is representative of the view experienced by people using this footpath and by people traveling in vehicles along New Bath Road. Landform is flat and the view is heavily filtered by trees and dense hedgerow vegetation beyond the highway verge in the foreground. Views beyond are contained by intervening hedgerows, trees and vegetation. Detracting elements visible within the view include highway infrastructure and traffic on New Bath Road.

The Site is not visible from this viewpoint.

VISUAL EFFECTS

The receptor sensitivity is assessed as high; the view represents that experienced by users of outdoor recreational facilities, including public rights of way, whose attention may be focused on the landscape.

The visual quality is assessed as poor; it comprises restricted views and views over a landscape of low value and quality.

The magnitude of change is assessed as none, the development is not discernible. The quality and character of the view will remain unchanged.

The visual effects are assessed as none.

MITIGATION

Not applicable.



View from the Site looking northwest towards Viewpoint 4

VIEW 5



6.1.5 VIEW 5

This photograph is taken from the footbridge over the A4 New Bath Road, located approximately 990m northeast of the Site. It is representative of the view experienced by people using this bridge to cross New Bath Road. Although the view is elevated, it is heavily filtered by successive layers of trees and dense hedgerow vegetation. The viewpoint is located on the urban edge of Twyford and detracting elements visible within the view include commercial and residential development, highway infrastructure and traffic on New Bath Road.

The Site is not visible from this viewpoint.

VISUAL EFFECTS

The receptor sensitivity is assessed as high; the view represents that experienced by users of outdoor recreational facilities, including public rights of way, (although this is not considered to be a recreational route) whose attention may be focused on the landscape.

The visual quality is assessed as poor; it comprises restricted views and views over a landscape of low value and quality.

The magnitude of change is assessed as none, the development is not discernible. The quality and character of the view will remain unchanged.

The visual effects are assessed as none.

MITIGATION

Not applicable.



View from the Site looking northeast towards Viewpoint 5

VIEW 6



6.1.6 VIEW 6

This photograph is taken from Bridge Farm Road, located approximately 450m northeast of the Site. It is representative of the view experienced by people traveling in vehicles along Bridge Farm Road. Landform is flat and the view is heavily filtered by trees and dense vegetation lining the banks of the River Loddon in the foreground. Views beyond are contained by intervening hedgerows, trees and vegetation.

The Site is not visible from this viewpoint.

VISUAL EFFECTS

The receptor sensitivity is assessed as low, as the view represents that of people travelling through the landscape in cars other transport such that the speed and nature of the views involved are short lived and have no special significance.

The visual quality is assessed as poor; it comprises restricted views and views over a landscape of low value and quality.

The magnitude of change is assessed as none, the development is not discernible. The quality and character of the view will remain unchanged.

The visual effects are assessed as none.

MITIGATION

Not applicable.



View from the Site looking northeast towards Viewpoint 6

VIEW 7



6.1.7 VIEW 7

This photograph is taken from Bridge Farm Road where it crosses the railway line, approximately 490m northeast of the Site. It is representative of the view experienced by people traveling in vehicles along Bridge Farm Road. Although landform is flat, the view from the bridge is slightly elevated and is heavily filtered by trees and dense vegetation lining the railway line and the banks of the River Loddon. Views beyond are contained by intervening hedgerows, trees and vegetation.

The Site is not visible from this viewpoint.

VISUAL EFFECTS

The receptor sensitivity is assessed as low, as the view represents that of people travelling through the landscape in cars other transport such that the speed and nature of the views involved are short lived and have no special significance.

The visual quality is assessed as poor; it comprises restricted views and views over a landscape of low value and quality.

The magnitude of change is assessed as none, the development is not discernible. The quality and character of the view will remain unchanged.

The visual effects are assessed as none.

MITIGATION

Not applicable.



View from the Site looking northeast towards Viewpoint 7

VIEW 8



6.1.8 VIEW 8

This photograph is taken from Old Bath Road, located approximately 230m east of the Site. It is representative of the view experienced by people traveling in vehicles along the road. The viewpoint is located on the urban edge of Twyford adjacent to road crossing the River Loddon. Detracting elements visible within the view include residential development, highway infrastructure and traffic on Old Bath Road. Lying within the river floodplain, landform is flat and the wider view is heavily filtered by trees and dense hedgerow vegetation lining the river and the highway verges in the foreground. Views beyond are contained by intervening vegetation.

The Site is not visible from this viewpoint.

VISUAL EFFECTS

The receptor sensitivity is assessed as low, as the view represents that of people travelling through the landscape in cars other transport such that the speed and nature of the views involved are short lived and have no special significance.

The visual quality is assessed as poor; it comprises restricted views and views over a landscape of low value and quality.

The magnitude of change is assessed as none, the development is not discernible. The quality and character of the view will remain unchanged.

The visual effects are assessed as none.

MITIGATION

Not applicable.



View from the Site looking east towards Viewpoint 8

VIEW 9



6.1.9 VIEW 9

This photograph is taken from PRow TWYF2 within Loddon Nature Reserve, approximately 480m southeast of the Site. It is representative of the view experienced by people using the footpaths within the nature reserve. Landform is flat, and the view is open across the water body in the foreground. Marginal vegetation, trees and shrubs line the edge of the lake and contain wider views. Dense intervening vegetation on the opposite bank of the lake screens views longer views.

The Site is not visible from this viewpoint.

VISUAL EFFECTS

The receptor sensitivity is assessed as high; the view represents that experienced by users of outdoor recreational facilities, including public rights of way, whose attention may be focused on the landscape.

The visual quality is assessed as poor; it comprises a restricted view, with built form and infrastructure visible.

The magnitude of change is assessed as none, the development is not discernible. The quality and character of the view will remain unchanged.

The visual effects are assessed as none.

MITIGATION

Not applicable.



View from the Site looking southeast towards Viewpoint 9

VIEW 10



6.1.10 VIEW 10

This photograph is taken from Landsend Lane/PRoW CHAR5. It is located approximately 1450m southwest of the Site. It is representative of the view experienced by people using the footpath. Lying within the river floodplain, landform is flat and the view is open across fields in the foreground. Maidenhead to Reading mainline railway is visible where it is elevated by embankment where it crosses Park Lane. Longer views beyond are contained by intervening trees and vegetation on the railway embankment and within Loddon Nature Reserve. There are distant views of the Chiltern Hills.

The Site is not visible from this viewpoint.

VISUAL EFFECTS

The receptor sensitivity is assessed as high; the view represents that experienced by users of outdoor recreational facilities, including public rights of way, whose attention may be focused on the landscape.

The visual quality is assessed as poor; it comprises restricted views and views over a landscape of low value and quality.

The magnitude of change is assessed as none, the development is not discernible. The quality and character of the view will remain unchanged.

The visual effects are assessed as none.

MITIGATION

Not applicable.



View from the Site looking southwest towards Viewpoint 10

6.2 VISUAL EFFECTS

Below is a table which summaries the visual effects as considered in the visual appraisal for view points and receptors;

VIEW	RECEPTOR	SENSITIVITY	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE	EFFECTS PRE-MITIGATION
1	View from PRow CHAR3 within Loddon Nature Reserve, south of the Site.	High	Negligible	Slight
2	View from residential development on northeast edge of Charvil, west of the Site.	Medium	None	None
3	View from Charvil Meadows, northwest of the Site.	High	Negligible	Slight
4	View from Loddon Drive/PRow CHAR2, north-west of the Site.	High	None	None
5	View from footbridge over A4 New Bath Road, northeast of the Site.	High	None	None
6	View from Bridge Farm Road, northeast of the Site.	Low	None	None
7	View from Bridge Farm Road, crossing the railway line northeast of the Site.	Low	None	None
8	View from Old Bath Road, east of the Site.	Low	None	None
9	View from PRow TWYF2 within Loddon Nature Reserve, southeast of the Site.	High	None	None
10	View from Landsend Lane/PRow CHAR5, south-west of Site.	High	None	None

The proposed development has been considered from 10 viewpoint locations. Of these, two receptors have been assessed as potentially experiencing slight effects. All other receptors are assessed as experiencing no effects. This is due to the sensitivity (viewpoints 1 and 3) of the receptors and close proximity to the site. The magnitude of change in all cases is negligible or none.

The visual effects on all receptors are considered to be neutral; neither positive or negative. The existing industrial building will be replaced by oil storage tanks. The proposed development sits within the curtilage of existing development, and proposed development will be equal to or lesser in height and extent of built form footprint than existing. The surrounding built form and vegetation prevents the development from having a significant visual impact on the wider landscape and restricts views to those relatively close to the site.

6.3 VISUAL IMPACT - CONSTRUCTION PHASE

The construction of the development would impact on the same areas as those affected by the operational phase. However, the nature and scale of the impact would be different in that construction activities are likely to result in a greater area of disturbed land and a concentration of seemingly discordant features and activities that would result in temporary adverse impacts on visual amenity. The duration of the construction phase is estimated to take less than 6 months. Temporary impacts, even when likely to be 'substantial' are regarded as less significant than similar impact magnitudes arising from a permanent effect. Adverse impacts during the construction phase could arise from the following typical items associated with work of this nature. Proposed construction-related works including anticipated infrastructure provision would all be possible within the site boundaries. No trees, hedges or other mature vegetation are anticipated to be affected by the development.

General construction activities include:

- Vehicle moving materials to and from the site & movement of construction machinery & large scale construction equipment;
- Site clearance and excavations;
- Presence of construction workers, site compounds and parking on-site;
- Batching plants;
- Material stockpiles;
- Presence of hoardings and protective fencing, temporary lighting and signage;
- Installation of new infrastructure; installation of lighting;

6.3.1 MITIGATION DURING CONSTRUCTION

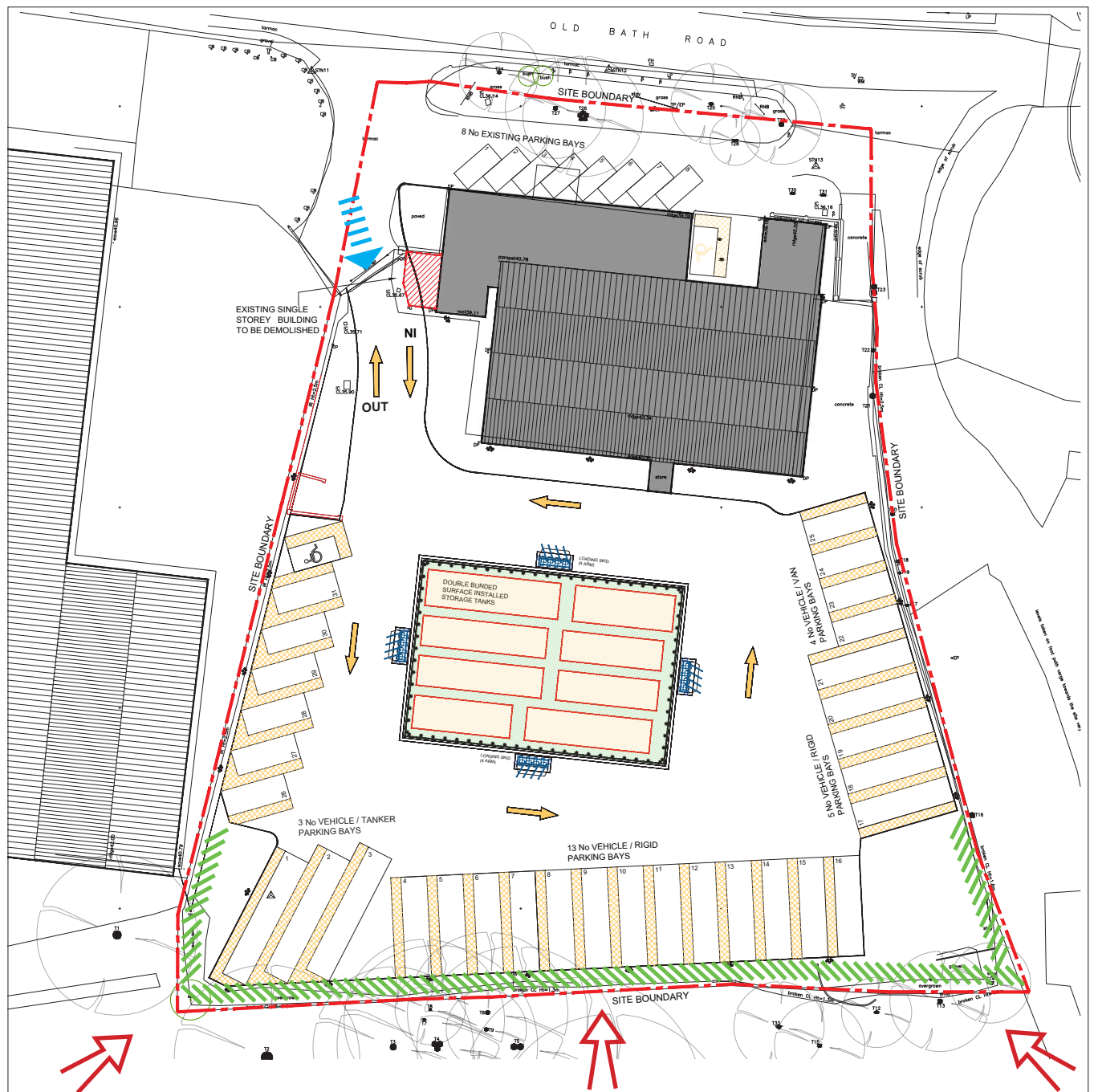
- Adherence to best practice set out in the Construction Environmental Management Plan to minimise negative visual effects including sensitive location of site cabins, storage and construction equipment.
- Application of tree protection measures in accordance with BS5837:2012 'Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition & Construction'.
- Erect perimeter site hoardings to minimise visual disturbance.

6.4 VISUAL MITIGATION

A combination of proposed landscaping and management techniques will be used to reduce the potential visual effects of the proposed development. The list below has been compiled taking into consideration the local landscape character as identified in the landscape appraisal and the individual mitigation recommendations as identified in the view point appraisals;

- A landscape scheme is proposed to the edge of the site to mitigate impact of the development. The landscape scheme will form a landscape buffer to the southern site boundary and screen/filter views of the development.
- Native species planting, will contribute towards on-site biodiversity enhancement and establish green infrastructure connectivity with the adjacent nature reserve.

Landscape mitigation will form an integral part of the development proposal. The arrangement of the site will be informed by the landscape and visual mitigation measures identified in the appraisal. In addition, a Landscape Layout should be prepared and submitted in support of the planning application, which would include the mitigation measures identified in this report.



KEY

- SITE BOUNDARY
- ▬▬▬▬▬▬ SITE ENTRANCE/EXIT

- ➔ EXISTING VIEWS INTO SITE
- ▨▨▨▨▨▨ PROPOSED LANDSCAPE BUFFER PLANTING

FIGURE 11 - LANDSCAPE FRAMEWORK PLAN

7.0 SUMMARY

The landscape and visual impact has been assessed using desktop-based research, site visits and consideration of the most recent published Character Assessment Guidelines.

7.1 LANDSCAPE SUMMARY

Published recognised character appraisals were used in the assessment of the landscape character and included the Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment and Natural England National Character Areas. This information together with a site specific appraisal, was used to assess the landscape quality, value and sensitivity of the development and this in turn was used to help determine the landscape effects.

The proposed development will not result in a change to the character of the regional or local landscape; it will remain as a mix of land uses including open water bodies, landfill sites, and restored agricultural fields, nature reserves and country parks and adjacent urban fringe.

Due to the brownfield nature of the development Site, the fact that it sits within the curtilage of existing industrial development, and the proposed development will be equal to or lesser in height and extent of built form footprint than existing, it is concluded that the resultant landscape effects of the proposed development on local landscape character will be negligible.

The landscape effects on the site are assessed as slight-moderate, as the sensitivity of the site is low. Land use will remain unchanged and the effects are considered neutral (neither beneficial or detrimental).

LANDSCAPE RECEPTOR	EFFECTS PRE-MITIGATION	EFFECTS POST-MITIGATION
Thames Valley NCA	Negligible	Negligible/None
Loddon River Valley with Open Water LCA	Negligible	Negligible/None
Open Countryside	Negligible	Negligible/None
Settlement	None	None
Site	Slight-Moderate	Slight

The table above summarises the landscape effects as considered in the landscape appraisal. It is expected that post mitigation, (after a period of 15 years when the planting has established), the site will become a more integral part of the landscape.

7.2 VISUAL SUMMARY

Viewpoints and potential receptors were selected from various locations identified through the desktop study and site visit. They have been chosen to provide a representation of the range of receptors that have views towards the site, and to provide a baseline for the visual amenity of the local area. Generally, longer views of the site were screened by the surrounding vegetation and built form.

Of these, two receptors have been assessed as potentially experiencing slight effects. All other receptors are assessed as experiencing no effects. This is due to the sensitivity (viewpoints 1 and 3) of the receptors and close proximity to the site. The magnitude of change in all cases is negligible or none.

The visual effects on all receptors are considered to be neutral; neither positive or negative. The existing industrial building will be replaced by oil storage tanks. The proposed development sits within the curtilage of existing development, and proposed development will be equal to or lesser in height and extent of built form footprint than existing. The surrounding built form and vegetation prevents the development from having a significant visual impact on the wider landscape and restricts views to those relatively close to the site.

The following table summarises the visual effects as considered in the visual appraisal. It is expected that post mitigation (after a period of 15 years when the planting has established and begun to reinforce the existing screening around the site), the effects of the proposed development would be reduced.

VIEW	RECEPTOR	EFFECTS PRE-MITIGATION	EFFECTS POST-MITIGATION
1	View from PRow CHAR3 within Loddon Nature Reserve, south of the Site.	Slight	Negligible
2	View from residential development on northeast edge of Charvil, west of the Site.	None	None
3	View from Charvil Meadows, northwest of the Site.	Slight	Negligible
4	View from Loddon Drive/PRow CHAR2, north-west of the Site.	None	None
5	View from footbridge over A4 New Bath Road, northeast of the Site.	None	None
6	View from Bridge Farm Road, northeast of the Site.	None	None
7	View from Bridge Farm Road, crossing the railway line northeast of the Site.	None	None
8	View from Old Bath Road, east of the Site.	None	None
9	View from PRow TWYF2 within Loddon Nature Reserve, southeast of the Site.	None	None
10	View from Landsend Lane/PRow CHAR5, south-west of Site.	None	None

It is assessed that the only receptors post mitigation, which would experience a slight adverse effect are Viewpoint 1, the footpath which run close to the rear of the site, and Viewpoint 3, located in Charvil Meadows; this is due to the proximity of the receptors to the site and the low-lying, flat, open fields between. It is considered very unlikely that the development will be visible from Viewpoint 3 due to screening by the intervening building. The proposed landscaping will play an important role in ensuring that the development is integrated as effectively as possible. Once established the mitigation measures will help to ensure that the development becomes a more integral part of the surrounding landscape.

The site has little value or quality in landscape and visual terms; its development will not cause any harm to landscape character and visually will not have any significant impacts. Only the closest, most sensitive receptors will be affected by the development and these will not have significant effects. Existing vegetation and proposed landscape mitigation will further reduce the visibility of the development.

APPENDIX 1

LANDSCAPE & VISUAL EFFECTS METHODOLOGY

LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

1.1 CRITERIA FOR DESCRIBING LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY

Landscape	High	Medium	Low
Landscape designation	A landscape of distinctive character susceptible to relatively small changes. Includes national or regionally designated landscapes e.g. Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV), National Scenic Area. Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes on the National Register	A landscape of moderately valued characteristics. Including local landscape designations.	A landscape of relative unimportance, the nature of which is tolerant to substantial change. No landscape designation.
Landscape resource	Important landscape resources or landscapes of particularly distinctive character and therefore likely to be subject to national designation or otherwise with high values to the public. Is vulnerable to minor changes.	Moderately valued characteristics reasonably tolerant of change.	Relatively unimportant/ immature or damaged landscapes tolerant of substantial change.
Scale and enclosure	Small intimate landscape.	Medium scale landscape.	Large scale open landscape.
Landform and topography	Mountainous or large dominating hills and valleys. Intimate small scale landscapes defined through easily identifiable elements in the immediate landscape.	Rolling landform with small hills and valleys. Some intimacy and human scale through landscape elements such as hedgerows and woodland copses.	Large scale open landscape. Little intimacy or human scale, few character elements or features.
Settlement	Organic land cover pattern	A gradation between High and Low	Grid like linear land cover pattern
Landmarks and visible built structures	Landscape with symbolic or important features	A gradation between High and Low	Landscape with no recognised individual features or elements
Remoteness and tranquillity	Remote location, little evidence of human activity	A gradation between High and Low	Highly developed countryside areas with continuous evidence of human activity
Landscape Quality and Value	A landscape of exceptional or high quality and/or high value.	A landscape of good or ordinary quality and /or good or moderate value	A landscape of low or poor quality and value

1.2 CRITERIA FOR DESCRIBING LANDSCAPE QUALITY

Landscape Quality	Definition	Typical Example
Exceptional	Strong landscape structure, characteristics, patterns, and/or clear urban grain identifiable with a historic period or event; Appropriate management for land use and land cover and/or a well maintained urban environment of distinction; Distinct features worthy of conservation, historic architectural grain; Sense of place exceptional local distinctiveness; No detracting features.	Internationally or nationally recognised. World Heritage Sites, National Parks, National Scenic Area, Special Landscape Area;
High	Strong landscape structure, characteristic patterns and/or clear urban grain; Appropriate management for land use and land cover, but potentially scope to improve; Distinct features worthy conservation; Sense of place; Occasional detracting features.	Nationally, regionally recognised e.g. parts of National Scenic Area, Conservation Area or Listed status. Registered Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes
Good	Recognisable landscape structure and/or urban grain Scope to improve management for land use and land cover; Some features worthy of conservation; Sense of place; Some detracting features.	Regionally recognised e.g. localised areas within National Park, National Scenic Area, AGLV.
Ordinary	Distinguishable landscape structure, characteristics, patterns of landform and land cover often masked by land use; Fractured urban grain with patterns of use difficult to distinguish; Scope to improve management of vegetation; Some features worthy of conservation; Some detracting features	Locally recognised landscape without specific designation.
Poor	Weak landscape structure, characteristic patterns of landform and land cover are missing, little or no recognisable urban grain; Mixed land use evident; Lack of management and intervention has resulted in degradation; Frequent detracting features.	A landscape without note or one singled out as being degraded or requiring improvement.
Very Poor	Degraded landscape structure, characteristic patterns and/or urban grain missing; Mixed land use or dereliction dominates; Lack of management/ intervention has resulted in degradation; Extensive detracting features.	A Landscape likely to be singled out as needing intervention or regeneration.

LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

1.3 CRITERIA FOR DESCRIBING LANDSCAPE VALUE

Landscape Value	Definition	Typical Example
High	An iconic landscape or element(s) held in high regard both nationally, regionally and by the local community; A landscape or element(s) widely used by both the local community and a broader visiting community; Features of particular historical protected significance ; Landscape or space which defines or is closely associated with a community and its life and livelihood.	Nationally, regionally recognised e.g. parts of National Park, National Scenic Area, Special Landscape Area; Conservation or Listed status Registered Historic Garden and Designed Landscape
Good	A landscape or element(s) recognised regionally and locally as important ; A landscape widely used by the local community; Features or elements widely used or visited and held in association with the area or community.	Part of an AGLV
Moderate	A landscape of local importance ; A landscape widely used by the local community; A sense of place recognisable and associated with the local area.	Area of local landscape importance
Low	A landscape without particular noted significance; A landscape or elements infrequently used by the local community; A landscape which is not distinct and does not add to the overall context of the area.	

1.4 MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (LANDSCAPE)

Magnitude of Change	Examples
High	The development would result in a prominent change to the landscape character (enhance or degrade). Major alteration to significant elements or features or the removal/introduction of substantial elements. The alteration of a landscape to substantially increase/decrease both the landscape value and quality.
Medium	The development would result in a change to the landscape character (enhance or degrade). Alteration to elements or features or partial removal/introduction. The alteration of a landscape to increase/decrease both the landscape value and quality.
Low	The development would result in a slight change to the landscape character (enhance or degrade). Alteration to minor elements or features or the removal/introduction. The alteration of a landscape to increase/decrease both the landscape value and quality.
Negligible	A very minor change which is not uncharacteristic and maintains the quality and value of the landscape.

1.5 SUMMARY TABLE TO DETERMINE LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

		Magnitude of Change			
		High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Sensitivity	High	substantial	moderate-substantial	moderate	slight
	Medium	moderate-substantial	moderate	slight-moderate	negligible
	Low	moderate	slight-moderate	slight	negligible
	Negligible	slight	negligible	negligible	none

The summary of effects on landscape can be expressed as an adverse or beneficial effect depending on the assessor's view regarding the nature and quality of the existing resource and how this has been changed. In some circumstances the change may be described as a neutral change if the expectation of the viewer or the fundamental nature and characteristics of a landscape appear unaffected.

VISUAL EFFECTS

1.6 CRITERIA FOR DESCRIBING VISUAL SENSITIVITY

Receptor Sensitivity	Description
High	Occupiers of residential properties Users of outdoor recreational facilities, including public rights of way, whose attention may be focused on the landscape Elevated panoramic viewpoints Communities where the development results in changes in the landscape setting or valued views enjoyed by the community
Medium	Residential properties with restricted views People engaged in outdoor recreation where enjoyment of the landscape is incidental rather than the main interest People travelling through the landscape where the views involved are transient and sporadic but have a special significance in either the journey or the expression of the landscape or community being visited.
Low	People at their place of work, industrial facilities. People travelling through the landscape in cars, trains or other transport such that the speed and nature of the views involved are short lived and have no special significance

1.7 CRITERIA FOR DESCRIBING VISUAL QUALITY

View Quality	Description
High	Iconic views or skylines which are individual character elements in their own right. Protected views through Supplementary Planning Guidance or development framework. View mentioned in the listing for a conservation area, listed building or scheduled monument as being important with regard to its setting. Wide panoramic distant views of a valued landscape(s).
Moderate	Views with strong and distinctive features. Uninterrupted views. Views over a landscape of recognised character and quality
Poor	Restricted views or views over a landscape of low value and quality.

1.8 MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (VISUAL)

Magnitude of Change	Examples
High	The development would result in a prominent change to the existing view and would change the quality of the view. The development would be easily noticed by the observer. The development may break the skyline or form some other substantial change to the view.
Medium	The development would result in a noticeable change in the existing view that may change the character and quality of the view. The change would be readily noticed by the observer but would not dominate the view.
Low	The development would result in a perceptible change in the existing view but this would not affect its character or quality. The development will appear as a small element in the wider landscape which may be missed by the casual observer. The view may be at such a distance as to reduce the appearance of the development.
Negligible	Only a small part of the development will be discernible and this may be for only part of the year or be a filtered view. The view may be at such a distance as to render the change virtually indiscernible without aid or reference. The quality and character of the view will remain unchanged.

1.9 SUMMARY TABLE TO DETERMINE VISUAL EFFECTS

		Magnitude of Change			
		High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Sensitivity	High	substantial	moderate-substantial	moderate	slight
	Medium	moderate-substantial	moderate	slight-moderate	negligible
	Low	moderate	slight-moderate	slight	negligible
	Negligible	slight	negligible	negligible	none

The summary of effects can be expressed as an adverse or beneficial effect depending on the assessor's view regarding the nature and quality of the existing resource and how this has been changed. In some circumstances the change may be described as a neutral change if the expectation of the viewer or the fundamental nature and characteristics of a view appear unaffected.